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January 31, 2014

Greetings to everyone on the Angola Connection list!

This is an account of the July 2013 reunion at Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre in Niagara Falls, Ontario. I know some of you have waited for it for many months. They do say "Better late than never", don't they? But before I get to it, just a reminder to let me know

- if you'd like a copy of the Angola Connection list at any point, or
- if you know of recent changes to your mailing/email address or to others' contact information.

And secondly, here's a Save-The-Date notice. The next Angola Connection gathering will take place at Mount Carmel again, in July of 2015.

So here are most of us.

Starting in the back row at the left is Richard Reed, Fred Brancel, David Gilchrist and Glenn Malcolm. Nancy Henderson-James is in the red T-shirt in front of John Rogers. Then comes John Hart, Wayne Dunbar, and Coriless Hanson. Beth Hanson is tucked in at his left shoulder, next to Ed LeMaster. Then comes Jean Burgess, Doris Hart, Marilyn McKim and Mary Pyne.

In the front row at the left is Mary Ann Litwiller, then Margaret Gilchrist, Liz Rohan, Bev Houslander, Ann Pullen, Joyce Myers-Brown, Barbara Rogers, Mary Dewar, Betty Gilchrist, Nancy Dunbar, Dona Julia Machado, Kathryn Collins, Virginia LeMaster, Helen Stockton and Nancy Tucker Reed.





Here are some highlights from Jean Burgess: “Angola Connections 2013 had the rich fellowships of previous gatherings and an interestingly diverse program of remembrance, worship, reports from the field.

Part of the program included a consideration of the uses of missionary archival treasures.

- Nancy Henderson-James presented on the value of donating archival material to universities, as her family has done. She also reported on Paul Blake's sharing of his parents' Angola photo collection through the Photobucket internet software site.

- I presented on the efforts of my siblings and myself to digitize our parents' photo collection and to photograph and digitize their Angolan art and handicraft collection. We have since

uploaded these images to the Photobucket site and hope to open it to the worldwide web shortly.

Social historian Ann Pullen presented on her research of the life and work of early 20th century US Congregational missionary Nellie Arnott, based on Nellie's letters, diaries and reports to her US church headquarters.

Sociologist Liz Rohan presented on her research of the life and work of Janette Estelle Miller, another early 20th century US Congregational missionary, based on the archive of Miller papers at the University of Michigan.

Consul General of Angola, Dona Julia Machado, was very interested in the above presentations and emphasized the importance of Angola missionary archival material to the nation.

It was Rose Watson who had the vision of linking the church-focused nature of Angola Connections to Angola nation building. She had invited Consul General Julia Machado and Angolan Ambassador to the United Nations, Ismael Gaspar Martins to attend our reunion. We were privileged to have Dona Julia Machado join us and make a presentation on Angola now and in the future. (Sr. Martins sent his sincere last minute regrets.) While Dona Julia was with us we were able to arrange a Skype call with Rose Watson and her daughter Bev -- a wonderful extension of the reunion by internet connection. Rose and Bev had planned to attend the reunion and Bev was to make a presentation on her mother's memoir work. Health matters kept them home but still very close to us in spirit.

A special thanks to Marilyn McKim and Doris Hart for taking care of all those logistical details that make a continental gathering such as this one run so smoothly.”

Before we move on, this is a great point to thank Jean Burgess for the massive amount of work she did in leading the Program Committee to create the diverse and interesting agenda.



Fred Brancel (wearing yellow button) has lost none of his abilities to deliver a quip and put a smile on your face. About attending the reunion, he wrote "It was my privilege to be with everyone."

Barbara Rogers (bottom right) "really appreciated the presentation by Icel Rodriguez. She shared information about the Methodist work. Because of poor connections with the leadership there, it's good to have a Rep. Also," she continued, "I was so glad that Jean and Rose facilitated

the presence of Julia Machado from the Angolan Consulate. While she had not been aware of some things from our perspective, like the difficulties of obtaining visas, it was good to hear about issues from the government's perspective. I also really enjoyed Joyce's presentation. It's so exciting to know that the people are really getting things together with regards to their churches and schools, especially the training of women. John and I enjoyed re-connecting with the Coriless Hansons, as they have not attended a Connection for a very long time. His book is a wonderful recollection of history, both of the church and government in general. We celebrated their anniversary together at a dinner. I enjoyed catching up on peoples' lives in general. Even with email communication, I always appreciate the personal contact. Although this year's gathering was smaller, I had a great time, and appreciate all the effort the planners put in. Having Doris (pictured at right) in charge of the finances was a great idea. I hope she wasn't overwhelmed."



Nancy Henderson-James (holding camera) felt that "for sheer usefulness, the presentation and Q&A with Consul General Julia Machado was excellent. Given the difficulties we have all had with visas, D. Machado gave us invaluable advice. Dona Julia is Angola's Consul General based in Houston. <http://www.angolaconsulate-tx.org/> The Consulate provides visas for people in the southern U.S. Two types are available, depending on your goal: a 2-year multiple entry or a 30-day single entry. Other diplomatic offices are located in New York, at the Embassy in DC, and possibly

in California in future. Dona Machado seemed willing to help troubleshoot visa problems in other regions. Fingerprints are required each time you apply for a visa, she said. This must be done in person. Angolan officials are considering whether to eliminate Letters of Invitation.”

Nancy enjoys Angola Connections because “they always give me a big jolt of optimism about what is happening in Angola. Relying on news sources can be pretty depressing, but hearing about Joyce's enthusiastic young people and their project, the Dille's progress in building schools, and the rebuilding of Quessua reminds me that Angolans have a lot to celebrate. I have also thoroughly enjoyed the reports from the academics -- Ann Pullen and Liz Rohan -- at the past couple of Connections. They have brought forward historical context to what we remember about Angola.”

Bev Houslander hosted the Gilchrists and joined the Connection for a short while. She says “It was definitely worth attending, just connecting with folks that one hasn't seen for awhile. What a treat it was to have David and Margaret in my home (even under their set of circumstances with the injury to Margaret's leg). They were simply such a delight to be around and hear their many stories of travel and life!



Ed LeMaster
Jean Burgess
Beth Hansen
Betty Bridgman
Fred Brancel



John Rogers
Barbara Rogers
Sydney Voutt
Helen Voutt
Doris Hart
John Hart



Ann Pullen
George Pullen
Nancy Henderson-
James
Margaret Gilchrist
David Gilchrist



Kathryn Collins
Virginia LeMaster
Bev Houslander
Joyce Myers-Brown
Nancy Dunbar
Wayne Dunbar



Wayne Dunbar
Mary Pyne
Icel Rodriguez
Beth Hanson
Coriless Hanson



Richard Reed, Nancy Reed, Margaret Gilchrist



Barbara Rogers and Ed LeMaster /
Nancy Henderson-James with camera



Icel Rodriguez and Betty Bridgman



Here, in full, is the presentation made by Icel Rodriguez, Director of Global Missions, Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church:

**EAST ANGOLA and FLORIDA, 10
years of Partnership
The United Methodist Church**

In January of 2003, Florida resident Bishop Timothy and Mrs. Melba Whitaker travelled to Angola, starting a partnership with the East Angola Conference that now celebrates its 10th anniversary. God has inserted us in a more-than-a-century old Methodist presence in this south-Saharan African nation. We are grateful for this mutually beneficial ministry that is bringing joy and strength to our Florida Conference, while it has helped rebuild and reenergize the mission of the United Methodist Church in East Angola.

In the first years of the partnership, much was achieved in the reconstruction of some buildings of the Quessua Mission station. The Central church and its parsonage, as well as the High School, School of



Miriam (Ferguson) and David Boal



Barbara Rogers and Ed LeMaster



Mary Dewar and Joyce Myers-Brown

Theology, Boarding House, and a Dining Room were reconstructed or built with financial assistance from churches in the Florida Conference.

At present, a structurally sound former boarding house in the Quessua Mission station is being renovated. This will allow the boys to relocate and open the current facility to become a residence for girls.

In 2009, it became clear to both partners that providing support for education was a priority for the future of our relationship. In correspondence with the needs of our African partners, we are emphasizing education and leadership formation from the local through the conference levels. Churches throughout the Florida conference give generously and as a result, we are able to provide scholarships for students pursuing Higher education and theological training, attending High School, and/or living at the Boarding House—both girls and boys.

Building relationships with our Angolan brothers and sisters is also a priority. Every year we send several mission teams to Quéssua, Malange. As volunteers, they perform different repair jobs in Quéssua, deliver much-needed donations, hold VBS with the children, and visit several Methodist churches and schools.

Dr. Leonardo and Dr. Cleivy Garcia, from the Methodist Church of Cuba, are serving as missionaries in Quessua, Angola, as of October 2011.



Kathryn Collins, David Gilchrist, Joyce Myers-Brown



Jean Burgess, George Pullen, Ann Pullen



Nancy (Tucker) Reed, John Rogers, Nancy Dunbar

This is the start of a three-way partnership between the Methodist conferences of Cuba, East Angola, and Florida, in which the three partners seek to help each other. The Garcias serve in Quessua with the financial support of the Florida Conference. Their responsibilities are innumerable. They facilitate our partnership and communicate with us at least on a weekly basis. They serve as professors in the School of Theology in Quessua. In addition, East Angola Bishop José Quipungo has appointed Rev. Cleivy as the Vice Dean of this same school, while Leonardo was appointed chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry and director of the boys' boarding house; simultaneously, they both serve as co-pastors of the Quessua UMC. The Garcias also oversee all funds donated by the Florida Conference and host our mission teams.

Now that Angola has lived in peace for the last eleven years, local churches are growing by leaps and bounds. We are glad to be part of this positive, encouraging story of re-birth and revival. Without a question, the overflowing joy and devotion of our partners in East Angola will also rekindle the Spirit in our Florida Conference."