INTERNATIONAL UNION OF 
GOSPEL MISSIONS

Chapter Two of the Gospel Rescue Mission Update

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Overview

How did the International Union of Gospel Missions begin? God saw fit to raise up a few mission leaders in 1913. They took a personal and united stand against sin, crime and poverty in all their forms, and on behalf of needy souls. Rescue missioners are committed men and women of God who, now as well as then, minister with a "rescue" purpose in mind.

IUGM and "Three Phases"

From 1872 to 1926 the characteristic of the "Initial Emergency Phase" of rescue was that rescue missions had to concentrate on survival and basic rehabilitation in dire personal emergency situations. It was during that first phase of rescue mission growth that many of the stalwart leaders of rescue ministries felt the need of some fellowship with others who were engaged in the same work. This association grew stronger and more helpful as some missions added more special programs in the Growing Diversification Phase, 1926-1980.

Diversification of services grew for two reasons. First, many government welfare and social service programs provided survival funds and services for many that formerly looked to rescue missions for help. This does not mean that none of our missions continue to provide survival services for multitudes. IUGM statistics still indicate that almost all missions provide programs for many whom have basic survival and personal needs. Second, in addition to ministries of this kind, many additional ministries and social services were added as individual and community needs showed the demand for other programs. These other programs will be spelled out in later chapters, especially in Chapter 11. Related to those two reasons for diversification is the need for missions to provide help along with government programs or to give supplementary assistance when other programs are not sufficient.

In other words, gospel rescue missions usually adapt or modify their ministries as needs for change occur. Dr. Seath spells out this quality of IUGM ministry: "Rescue missions have met the challenge of changing times and situations. Some have moved... to develop programs in different communities. New fields are invaded as Mission pioneers move onward. To sum up: The program of the Rescue Mission, to reach the Least, the Last and the Lost is so flexible that it is readily adjustable to meet whatever exigency is currently present."

There are some ministries which cannot be performed by churches or other agencies, because they have "neither equipment, staff or know how for the highly specialized service necessary to adequately perform the work of Christ in these fields. Gospel rescue missions have a unique combination of skills and personnel that are particularly potent if used with the gospel and under the Holy Spirit's direction. Indeed, during withdrawal of
churches from decaying inner cities, conditions began to motivate missions to fill some of the vacuum left behind. Area-wide outreach, as a result, will be a joint emphasis of many missions along with regular programs in this third or present phase, Maturation of Ministry and Operation.

Throughout the history of the IUGM, there has been a good degree of unity and cooperation among missioners. At the same time, there has been maintenance of the independence and autonomy of each mission in its own right. The IUGM organization has no jurisdiction or control over any mission.

Throughout the first phase, autonomy and independence of each mission had been established, along with unity and collaboration among all missions as characteristics to strengthen the entire body. This was further tested in the second phase, especially during the Great Depression.

New factors since 1981 have brought about new reasons during the third phase both to maintain the identity of each mission and to emphasize IUGM unity and collaboration. Some of these new factors have been shown in national cutbacks of welfare and other social service provisions and funding. Insistence that non-governmental organizations raise funds and develop their own programs to replace those of public funds and programs is an opportunity for gospel missions. Rescue missions will do well to rise to the occasion, for they are, for the most part, able to understand needs of persons in areas of large population concentration. They do this better than many well-meaning persons who invade the city with attempts to "reach" people there without understanding them, their needs, or how best to serve them.

**Need and Vision Bring Action**

It was inevitable that the special method and ministry, identified as that of the gospel rescue mission, should motivate early mission leaders to unite for mutual encouragement and to share information on better ways of working. Each person engaged in IUGM ministries should read what they formulated in their charter and succeeding organizational statements and actions in those early days. A good summary of those basics is found in the 1984-1985 Directory under the title "About the International Union of Gospel Missions." In the same context key factors are described:

Organization of IUGM into districts, governing functions of the Board of Trustees, individual memberships, and mission memberships and dues.

Of particular note are stated purposes of the organization, prefaced by, "Time has proven that the purposes of the organization are:

- To promote cooperation among missions.
- To develop higher standards of Gospel relief work as well as rehabilitation of persons.
- To prevent duplication.
To distinguish the safe and sane mission from the fanatic, enthusiastic, and other solicitor missions.

To conduct an annual convention, hold regional institutes and to provide a training program for individuals within member missions.

To provide programs of benefit to its members. To develop public information aids.

To assist in placement of staff people in member missions.

On the date of the incorporation of IUGM is September 17, 1913. The first convention was held in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1914. While space will not allow mentioning of the many, many leaders of IUGM throughout the years, it should be said that a new infusion of life came into IUGM in 1923 under William E. Paul, Peter McFarlane, Fred Becker, John McIntyre, Clemme Ellis White, William Grobe, and "Daddy" Ward.

It should not be thought that no attempts were made to organize gospel rescue workers between 1872 and 1913. Clifford Hartzell points out that one earlier attempt to organize missions was unsuccessful for at least two reasons: "...the annual meeting took on the nature of (only) a Bible conference rather than a time of discussion of mutual problems and furthering the interests of its member missions ... another possible reason ... was ...'one man' leadership and control... This always spells danger ... IUGM has rarely, if ever, been under the control of any one..." 5

The division of powers within IUGM has been seen by Hartzell and others as a great check against abuses of leadership responsibilities. The original fellowship style was augmented by division of leadership under district presidents who formed the Executive Committee.

It is now referred to as the Board of Trustees, the legal designation. In early years of the organization, there were a few field secretaries and an executive secretary, Chauncey Beeman. Beginning with Ernest Tippett in 1957, the creation of a central office (now in Kansas City, Missouri) developed under successive executive secretaries. This made the present collaboration of central office and national officers with the Board of Trustees an ideal structure. The names of all International presidents and of executive secretaries are listed in each issue of the IUGM Directory. Reverend William L. Wooley has been the current executive secretary since 1974.

Earlier conventions and district meetings in Phases One and Two prominently featured testimonies and "miracles of rescue" with focus on how to proclaim the gospel through rescue missions and how to enlist other workers. During Phase Two, there was real fear that simple proclamation of the truth and ministry to the "down and out" might be diluted or eclipsed by the variety and methods of ministries that developed. Care has been and must continually be taken to keep the original functions of rescue foremost, while accepting whatever new ministries the Lord indicates to be necessary.
The present Constitution of IUGM as printed in the Directory includes the statement: "Member missions will be expected to be accepted in their communities as maintaining clean and utilitarian facilities and a sound gospel program."  

That same section includes a "Statement of Faith" adopted October 24, 1970. This emphasis on both faith and practice has always marked IUGM. This double emphasis is enlarged in the Constitution under the title, Object: "The principal objects for which the Corporation is to be formed are the fellowship and cooperation with all engaged or interested in Gospel Missions and other Rescue Work throughout the United States and other lands in the mutual advancement of the causes of our Lord Jesus Christ."  

The responsibility of ministering to the whole person, "of learning more about that whole person -- and of best methods of counseling and guiding him, are delineated fully in Seath's *Unto the Least of These* in the chapter written by Maurice Vanderberg. He calls for learning of more skills and greater proficiency in their use. It is most illuminating to peruse the words of Cliff Hartzell as he said, about two-thirds of the way through Phase Two, that IUGM would have to develop the very way it is going now. We quote at some length:

In the light of the ministry of rescue, we should be making a stronger impact on the religious life and press of our day... (thru) unity, purpose, and cooperation with existing churches and other rescue agencies...

The immediate future can be, and most likely will be, a transition period, and the IUGM should be giving serious consideration to this phenomenon that is upon us....

...We do not mean. (a change in the message of Rescue Missions -- the message of the Gospel of Christ and its power to save... if and when this message is superseded, watered down, or neglected, Ichabod will most certainly be written over the doors of our Missions....

Originally, the character of our Rescue Missions was determined by the skid row environment, in which the Mission was situated....

In the foreseeable future, the skid rows of our cities will be, to a great extent eliminated... these lost souls will be scattered to many parts of our cities.... Their migration will naturally be to the various rundown and shabby areas of our cities, where ... not only abject poverty reigns, but drunkenness, vice and immorality Neglected children, sorrowing mothers, drunken fathers, and discouraged older people live in these areas into which the skid row man will drift... This will be the future home of Gospel Missions...

... the ministry to a great extent will be to families of women and children.
Economic factors such as automation and technological advancement causing greater unemployment, increased moral looseness, and lower standards reflected in the alarming increase in alcoholics, especially among women, and the tragic lowering of the average age for criminals, are all indications that point to increased demands for the Gospel Mission ministry.

Another factor that can be considered is moving out of the city churches, especially in the rundown areas, to suburban communities, leaving the Gospel Missions to be just about the only Protestant effort spiritually, in these areas.

People: Needs and Ministries to Meet Them

The IUGM majors in getting down to the most basic issue. How do we best meet basic needs, spiritual, material and social and thereby minister to the whole person? The answer: Do God's work in God's time in God's way.

As we scan one hundred twelve years of gospel rescue mission service since 1872, we realize many missions have been in existence for varying lengths of time. Some were intended to deal only with emergencies of a short-term nature. Most of those that closed did so due to one or more factors, like shortage of funds or personnel, urban renewal or other "slum clearance," replacement of mission services by other agencies, neighborhood changes in and breakdown of physical facilities.

One factor that has kept many missions “in business” for long periods of time, and has been referred to earlier, needs repeating here. That is flexibility and adaptability to change. Missions came into existence due to one or more urgent needs, like ministering to transients. Other ministries are added as needed. Usually activities that are no longer needed are discontinued. There are always cases of "pet projects" not really needed, or continuing programs for sentimental or traditional reasons, after the need for them has ceased.

The adaptability of missions to meeting people's needs always poses valid question. For instance, now that homelessness has been discovered and agencies rush to do something about it, is it just another passing fad that secular society will say much about now but forget later? If real long term action is provided, as it should be, by others, will rescue missioners who have seemed to be the only ones noticing the problem of homelessness, be affected adversely?

Whatever the issue may be, the reaction of the true missioner should be like that of George Sleeth, active in a mission now associated with Goodwill Home and Missions, Newark, New Jersey. In 1918 when some men wanted to close that mission since the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution would do away with drunkenness, and World War I
had made the world safe for democracy, no longer would there be enough individuals needing the services of the mission. Mr. Sleeth's response to such was that as long as there was sin in the world, there would be a need for rescue missions.

Mission Ministries

We have defined a gospel rescue mission, in part, as "a distinctive form of missionary outreach." We can observe the "form" by keeping records of individual mission ministries. A survey of our missions is made each year by the Central Office. Comparisons of figures showing kinds of ministries helps to identify missions as being of one "type" or another. More correctly, one can say its "type" is its principal or main ministry, since most missions now have more than one type ministry. There are even some that may be referred to as "multi-function" missions, since there are several major programs provided for those in need. Programs themselves and more information about them are described further in Chapter 11 of this Update. A partial description of types is necessary here. Comparison with types' as described by Drs. Paul and Seath will show both the identity of ministries by all gospel rescue missions at any phase of our ministry and also differences from one period of time to another. What are their identities, and what are differences?

**Gospel Hall Mission:** By choice or by limitations of facilities: A place where preaching the gospel is the main program item. It is basic to all mission ministries. Only a few specialized rehabilitation programs do not have preaching services. Such places provide gospel communication by teaching or counseling. Gospel Hall types of missions may include Bible classes, prayer meetings, counseling, as facilities may allow.

**Lodging House (or Dormitory) Mission:** This type mission embodies the stereotype we have of missions. Built on the foundation of gospel proclamation, provision of survival components of shelter and food and not merely social and material factors. They have to do with showing mercy as well as providing facilities to which souls may come to get hunger and thirst satisfied, both spiritual and physical.

**Industrial Mission:** Another basic type mission is the industrial mission. It has all the characteristics of gospel hall and dormitory type missions, and adds another very important adjunct which greatly improves opportunities to deal with souls over a longer time of continuous contact. That added feature is the provision of employment. This not only meets a basic need for work, but often makes it possible for men to stay at a mission long enough to receive basic Bible instruction, more advanced studies in Christian life and witness, and benefit from discipleship programs coupled with counseling services for present need and future progress.

**Neighborhood Mission and Welfare Mission:** In earlier days, a neighborhood mission was and sometimes still may be a rescue mission that is located in a residential neighborhood as compared to a "skid row" mission. Its focus is on family and children's work and outreach to the poor. A welfare mission attempts to provide many of the programs and services offered by other missions, with addition of "casework, programs of
relief and rehabilitation, court and prison work, hospital and home visitation … nurseries, rest homes … boys' and girls' clubs … camps …

Especially now, in the Third Phase, we do not classify a mission by "type". It is more likely to be true that missions will provide programs according to multiple needs rather than to organize a mission to meet only one or two needs. Not only have many missions developed multi-function programs since the mid-seventies, but this has also been a fact as far back as the 1920's. why make this point? Gospel rescue missions have not usually been concentrating thought on publicizing their good works. They have been so busy doing their work to meet the need that they have not usually come to the attention of persons who desire to sponsor worthwhile philanthropies or legislation. Of course, there are a few gospel rescue missions that are nationally known or widely known about in their own area or region.

The fact that missions today provide many services to "clients" is reflected in the listing of letters of the alphabet alongside names of IUGM member missions in each issue of the Directory. In the alphabetical listing, the category "Z - Other" is of great interest. It is very revealing. It further indicates the adaptability of missions to provide ministries as needs arise. A partial list includes:

Various alcohol-related special programs in addition to regular services of this kind; college level Bible School for inner city pastors; coffee houses; foot clinic; gardening; home for the elderly; home for prisoners after release; juvenile offender center; men's auxiliary; senior citizen programs; teen girls group home ;phone-a-story(children); special expansions of usual ministries in areas of camping, literature and music.

One hundred six shelters and homes for women, including pregnancy care are operated by missioners at various stages of development, capacity, variety of facilities and competency of staff. The same can be said for eighty industrial programs at missions. Seventy-two extended rehabilitation programs for men are operated in city environments. Twenty-seven alcoholism clinics are operated over and above routine such services at most missions. Thirty-four drug rehabilitation programs are operated by IUGM missions. Nineteen missions have ministries with migrants.

Statistical Interpretation

A study of IUGM statistics reveals that there have been periods of normal growth and decline in mission provision of human services. However, there has been no major drop off of essential human services when all member missions are viewed as a whole. There is some significant differences between percentages offering particular ministries as reported by missions who submit reports, and percentages of all missions, who list identical services in the Directory, whether they submit annual figures or not.
"Services Rendered on a Regular Basis" are indicated by alphabetical codes A to Z in the IUGM Directory. Aside from that, there appear to be no differences that cannot be explained by some or all of the following: increase or decrease of services due to change in demand, economic factors, availability of personnel, building and equipment facilities, external population and social conditions.

The gathering and use of statistics has taken a major step forward in the findings of our first major Self Study. It covered a three year period, from 1980 to 1982.

The IUGM launched the survey upon the recommendation of Brother Wooley, with Steve Burger as chairperson. Mr. Burger reported that internal and external factors needed study. The Self Study Commission was commissioned to look first at the internal factors which relate

- to how the local mission looks at itself, how satisfied it is with its own operation, how well it is fulfilling its own goals, and what the IUGM can do to help the local mission in these concerns …

- external (factors). how the mission relates to its community, and how that community relates to the mission.

- how all the changes in a community, and its changes in policies, laws, and approaches affect our ministries as well as the questions does the community view the mission, the way we view ourselves, and are we doing the things we need to do to survive within our community, state and national arena? What can the IUGM do to facilitate the local mission in this task?

These questions gained new meaning as we see litigation … over the nature of mission ministry, and governmental involvement with missions throughout the country, as well as in Canada, relating to the issues of zoning, rehabilitation, minimum wage, civil and human rights, employment policies, and community master plans.  

At the very time our cities (and many other locations) need injections of new ventures by experienced practitioners, it is possible to turn to a major force already in the field: IUGM! It is truly possible to formulate both strategy and program by which to launch a calculated outreach, on a local or extended scale.

Two major factors need expression here. The first, awareness not shared widely enough, that there is such diversity among missions. There still are very small missions located in places where only a small mission can operate one or two programs or services, to meet great needs on a small scale. There are by comparison large installations with multiple facilities and ministries, with multi-function capabilities. There is the large mission in a small city; the neighborhood mission in a small town; a mission farm program; many
specialized clinics, treatment centers and residential programs. Most people have a stereotype of a mission based on what missions they know about first-hand. At the outset, in beginning to comprehend gospel rescue missions today, one can get a good beginning perspective by first noticing the diversities of missions and their programs.

The second major item of notice here is the necessity of recognizing both the autonomy of each mission and its need to collaborate on a voluntary basis with IUGM. At the same time, IUGM has to be careful to offer much assistance to each local mission on a voluntary basis rather then exhibiting an assumption that the mission is "under" IUGM rather than an equal participating unit.

The Self Study says, in part, that, "Most missions feel a close and good relationship with the IUGM .. Either a mission does very well, or has little relationship … IUGM (should) recognize clearly its role as a ‘service’ organization to the local missions, and that it set goals with the local mission … on how to carry out the ‘servant’ role the next 10 years…”

Of this last statement, it is of importance to note with pleasure the significance of the words, “IUGM … its role as a ‘service’ organization … set goals with (not dictate to) the local mission …. Carry out the servant role.”

**IUGM Perspective**

To observe the IUGM evolve from a spontaneous beginning under the direction of the Holy Spirit as a special new instrument under God, to a currently continuing channel of the Spirit, has been an exciting experience. Yet, this has been more than an emotional impact. The realization that we are increasing our business-like attention to our responsibilities is satisfying to those who desire maximum effectiveness from all our input. From mere gathering of annual statistics, we have gone to a research and evaluation concept and process. With maturity in our organizational growth, we are in a position to utilize attention to community relationships and responsibilities, in part symbolized by our Government Action Committee. Add to that the Self Study Commission, the ensuing Certification Committee and the Development Committee and there is the evidence of gospel rescue mission arousal from an already creditable service to God and the souls of men, to planned advance in more effective ministry.

As we progress, the stereotype of a rescue mission will be altered to reveal the multiplication of ministries with the one Message. No one thing can be said to be the spark that started IUGM emergence in the present advance, but it could very well include the insistence on the adoption of the "Statement of Faith.” This helps capture some of the early spirit of allegiance to the Word of God as basic to IUGM's nature and indispensable to all aspects of its ministry.

Some of the original slogans of this movement became suspect to some observers. It was not that "In Union God Moves" is wrong. It is that church union movements were seeking for union of churches and organizations on an un-biblical basis. "No Creed but
Christ, No Law but Love" was never meant to imply or discarding of the Bible or Bible-based statements of faith. It meant rather that we wanted no man-made creed that was in any point heretical to take the place of a truly sound statement of faith. That statement of faith could in turn be subscribed to by persons from any denominational or non-denominational Bible-based group, making love for one another, as missioners, possible from that base and both truth and love our message to the lost.

Dr. Paul was at a time and place in which to state this as follows:

"In its true sense, a Mission presupposes that its constituency are unconverted people in a community which has no or little interest in the church. Since the church is a body of believers (or should be) the first function of the Mission is to win souls to Christ. As such it becomes an out-station where the souls won to Christ are transferred to the established Church for nurture and training in the doctrines and beliefs of the Church. . . the true Mission operates on the motto, 'No Creed by Christ; no law but love . . .

"'No law but love'. . . (goes) beyond. . . The controversies of doctrines and form of government, to begin on the basis of conversion. 'Ye must be born again.' This did not mean that Mission workers did not themselves have a creed, for they did and belonged to various churches, but . . , they attempted to reach the unconverted with the simple approach and one that is fundamental. . . The acceptance of Jesus Christ as a Personal Saviour and guidance in their rule of life by the Holy Spirit so that converts could find their way into the church of their own choice. . . . A mission should direct the converts to the church of their choice, that they many be trained in the theology and belief of the church. . . "

More will be said of the relationship of church and mission in Chapter 4. In the meantime it is vital to conceive of the gospel rescue mission in both the old way of its being the "arm of the church downtown" and in the new additional way of being part of the church's presence downtown or anywhere else it establishes itself.
End Notes

1. Seath, Unto the Least of These, pp. 7-8.


5. Hartzell, Clifford S. , "IUGM - Past, Present, Future" in IUGM Winona Lake Institute notes, no date, page 1; on the same line of thought, see Paul, W. E. , Romance of Rescue, pp. 84-85.

6. Directory, p. 84.


11. See page 2.


14. Directory, p. 4


