



NEW IMMIGRANT GROUPS MINISTRIES IN THE U.S.A.

NEWS FROM THE DESK OF ANGEL SUÁREZ-VALERA

SECOND QUARTER 2006

REFLECTION: IMMIGRATION SUNDAY



This Sunday, July 2, is the religious day dedicated to immigration. In October 2004, we gave each one of you the PC (USA) Study Guide "Resolution Calling for a Comprehensive Legalization Program for Immigrants Living and Working in the USA". You may order extra copies by calling 1-800-524-2612, specifying PDS order #68-600-05-001. There, you can find biblical texts with the following reflections:

- *What Was I Before and What Am I Now*
(Deut. 10:1819; Eph. 2:1920)
- *Gifts of the Stranger*
(Acts 10 and 11:118; 2 Cor. 1:37; Matt. 25: 2128)
- *Justice as the Distribution of Power and Resources*
(Matt. 12:1--8; Micah 6:8; Lev. 25:1819; Amos 5:24)
- *Peace and Reconciliation*
(1. Cor. 12; Gen. 1:26 28; Eph. 2: 1118; Acts 17:2628; Gal. 3:28)
- *Peace and Security*
(Matt. 10:39; Isa. 65:17-25; Ps. 118:9)

"The biblical account of Peter and Cornelius is especially pertinent to the issue of immigrants in our midst. It was through Cornelius, the outsider, that Peter came to recognize that Gentiles were included in the church's mission and ministry. Similarly today, churches are called to seek relationship with immigrant neighbors and to open to the transformation Christ is bringing to churches and to our society through the new immigrants."

"Reformed theology teaches that a persistent manifestation of human sinfulness is the inclination of the powerful to use their power for their own interest rather than for the common good. For Christians, the implication is not that power is inherently evil but that power must be widely distributed so

that all may have an influence on the shape of social and economic policies. It is not accidental then that undocumented workers receive minimal wages and no benefits and also that they have virtually no power to be able to alter the conditions of their labor. A Christian view of justice insists that undocumented workers receive what is due them and that the obstacles to their empowerment be removed. In a Christian understanding, Christ is the presence and possibility of peace. He has broken down the barriers of hostility and enmity that divide peoples from each other. In Christ there is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female; all are one in the reconciliation Christ has brought about."

"As we examine issues related to immigration, distinctions based on nationality and ethnicity have often functioned to legitimate injustice. For Christians, these distinctions must give way to Christ's commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves. In fact, the hospitable reception of immigrants is a sign of the reconciling work of Christ in the world. Though diverse, all the world's peoples are one in the family of God, created for relationship with one another that excludes no one."

THE 2006 NATIONAL NEW IMMIGRANT PRESBYTERIAN LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The year's leadership training event will be held in Nashville, Tenn., October 19-22. Invitations with registration, hotel and travel information will be mailed during July to select qualifying leadership.



BOARD OF PENSIONS QUESTIONNAIRES NEEDED



During June, we sent a Board of Pensions questionnaire to immigrant leadership related to the NIGM. It is important the leadership complete and return the survey, even if you are currently a member of the BOP. The information will be used to explore how BOP can help those pastors and lay leaders who are not receiving insurance and retirement benefits. If you did not receive the information, please call Angie or email arobards@ctr.pcusa.org.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 217TH PC (USA) GENERAL ASSEMBLY



- The Rev. Joan Gray, of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, was elected to the two-year term position as G.A. moderator, replacing the Rev. Rick Ulford-Chase.
- Elder Robert Wilson from Presbytery of North Alabama, a member of Fellowship Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, AL, was confirmed unanimously as the Vice Moderator.
- Linda Bryant Valentine was confirmed as the executive director of the General Assembly Council, replacing John Detterick who served in this position for eight years. Linda marks history as the first woman to be elected as executive director.
- Immigration Issues: Again, This office advocated with different presbyteries presenting immigration overtures to the General Assembly. Out of three recommendations, the 217th GA (2006) approved one summarized and amended version. It is Item 09-15 "On Advocacy and Welcome for All Immigrants". The final text and all other GA actions can be found on www.les-pcusa.org.
- Also, we invite all of you to join the PC (USA) network "Presbyterians For Just Immigration." PFJI is committed to fostering discussion, sharing resources, promoting advocacy, and writing liturgy on various

immigration topics. Contact Dana Dages at 1-888-728-7228, ext. 5202 or ddages@ctr.pcusa.org.

- Three major topics in the G.A. addressed in a letter by the Moderator Rev. Joan Gray and Stated Clerk Clifton Kirkpatrick. Read the entire letter at www.pcusa.org/oga.index.htm#news.
- Two overtures calling for exploring divesting from companies profiting from war in Sudan were approved.
- Action taken regarding Haiti calling for the US government to halt its current practice of immediately deporting Haitians who are "attempting to escape the horror that exists in that troubled country." It was noticed that there is unequal treatment given to Haitians seeking asylum versus other immigrants.

PCUSA AND THE PC OF GHANA

As an initiative from this office, the 217th General Assembly (2006) approved the following Common Framework for Mission in the U.S.A. between the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

"Presbyterians from Ghana continue to immigrate to the United States in large numbers and many have shown a desire to maintain ties with their Presbyterian heritage. Because of this fact, Presbyterian churches and fellowships are being established across the nation. The PC(USA) wants to support a model for new church development among Ghanaians that maintains a vital relationship with Presbyterian denominations in both countries. Existing Ghanaian congregations in the U.S.A. with membership in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana are encouraged to develop active relationships with PC(USA) presbyteries while maintaining active support for the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. The PC(USA) welcomes the initiative of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana in mission in the U.S.A. and desires such mission to be done in partnership between the two churches. The common goal is to provide Presbyterian churches for immigrants from Ghana that are positively related to both the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Presbyterian Church of Ghana."

NEW LEADERSHIP FOR PAKISTANI FELLOWSHIP

The Rev. Nadeem Sadiq has been working with the Pakistani-American Presbyterian Fellowship in Albany, New York for eight months.

In June, Albany Presbytery accepted him as the new pastor of the fellowship for a three-year project. Congratulations!

CONGRATULATIONS – IT'S A GIRL!



Simon Dhol and his wife are the proud parents of a beautiful baby girl. Simon is a lay leader for the Sudanese group nesting with Grace Church on Silver Lake in Columbia Heights, Minn. Well-wishes can be sent to the family at 261 East University Ave. #901, St. Paul, MN 55101.

RACIAL ETHNIC YOUNG WOMEN SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

New Immigrant Ministries and the National Network of Presbyterian College Women (NNPCW) are pleased to announce that Karine Rodrigues Theodoro is the first recipient of the NNPCW New Immigrant Scholarship. Karine, a member of the Brazilian Presbyterian Fellowship of Dallas, TX, will receive a \$1500 scholarship for the 2006-2007 academic year. This scholarship is renewable for up to one year. In addition, Karine will receive a \$500 book scholarship from Presbyterian Women.

Karine will begin her second semester at Richland College of Dallas, where she is majoring in psychology. In addition to graduating in the top 10% of her high school class, she has served her congregation as a deacon and member of the worship team. Congratulations, Karine!

The NNPCW New Immigrant Scholarship, inaugurated in 2006, is a partnership effort between the National Network of Presbyterian College Women and the Office of New Immigrant Ministries. To learn more about NNPCW and this scholarship fund, go to <http://www.pcusa.org/nnpcw>.

PAKISTANI WOMAN ORDAINED

Musarrat Khan holds the honor of being the first woman in 150 years of Christianity in Pakistan to be Commissioned Lay Pastor. The Presbytery of Tropical Florida certified her in 2005 and she was Commissioned May 9.



Musarrat leads the South Asian Christian Fellowship and a radio ministry which can be heard via the web at www.whsrradio.com on Saturdays at 3:30 p.m.

Her favorite scripture verse is Philippians 4:13: *I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me.*

SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN AND YOUNG ADULT CONFERENCE will be held in Niagara Falls, New York July 21-23. Contact Rev. Emanuel Nasir for information jfa1990@comcast.net

CHANGES TO MINORITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

Eleanor Ivory, director of the PCUSA Washington office, sent us the following notification, "As written in an article from the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR), affirmative action programs are being weakened across the nation's campuses. PCUSA General Assembly policy has supported affirmative action over the years as a way to offset discriminatory practices in education. Advocates may want to check their own institutions to see what is happening there. Your voice toward maintaining affirmative action may be needed at your former colleges, universities or those attended by your children.

For more information regarding legislative and other issues visit www.pcusa.org/washington.

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For more PCUSA news and events online, <http://www.pcusa.org/navigation/news.htm>