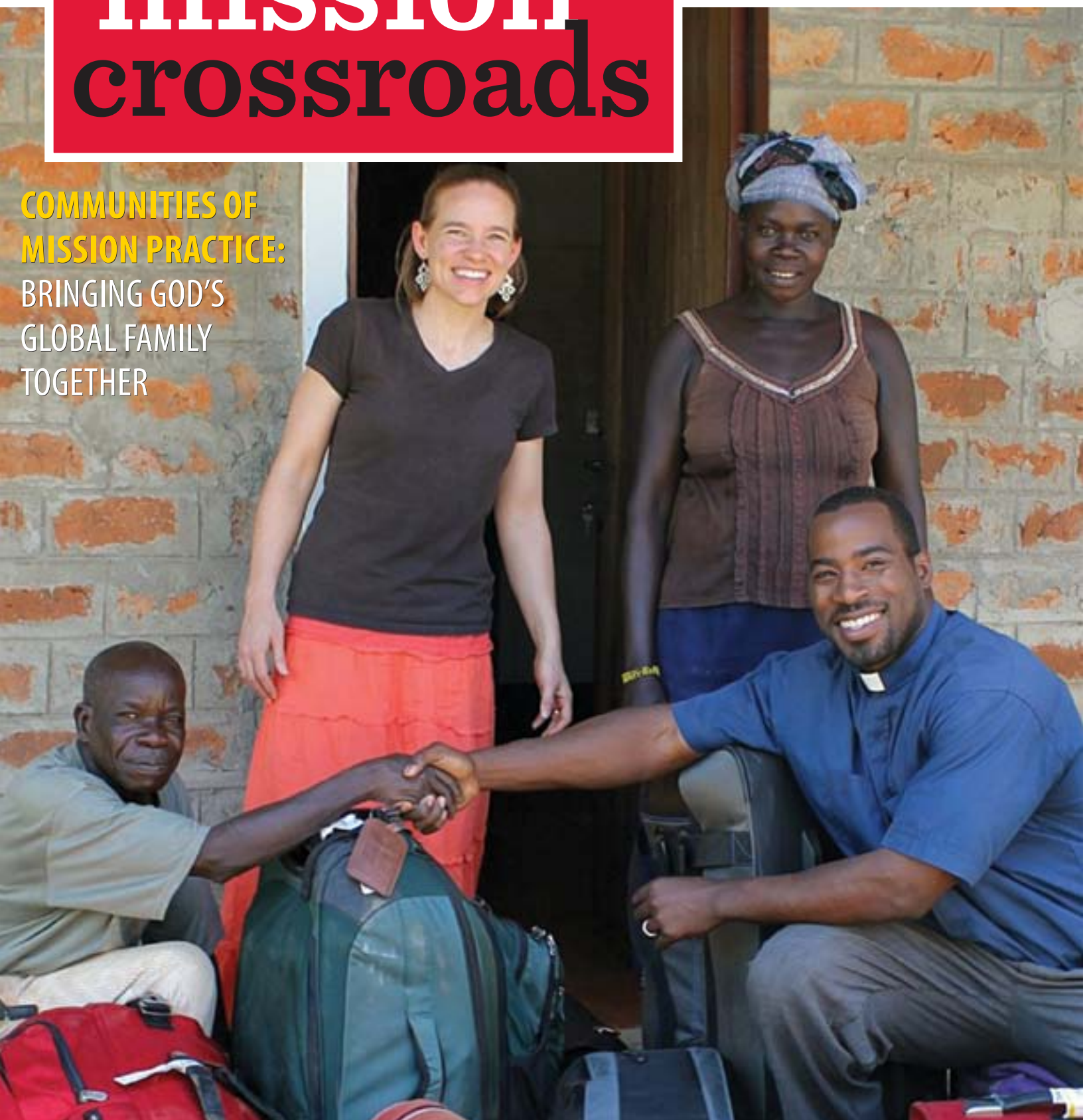


mission crossroads

www.pcusa.org/missioncrossroads

COMMUNITIES OF
MISSION PRACTICE:
BRINGING GOD'S
GLOBAL FAMILY
TOGETHER



RISKY JOURNEY / SOUTH SUDAN ODYSSEY / EXPANDING MISSION SENDING
NEW BEGINNINGS / MISSION IN EVERY PEW / WORLD ROUNDUP / MORE



Hunter Farrell

Several hundred Congolese children have access to education, thanks to global collaboration within the Congo Mission Network: Congolese partners with U.S. educators, mission co-workers in the Congo with Myers Park Presbyterian Church in North Carolina.

Through the Peru Mission Network, the Bridge of Hope fair trade handicraft project has tripled women’s income in Peru. Presbyterian Women, mission co-workers and many Midwestern congregations join Partners for Trade, an NGO formed out of U.S. congregations, all supporting the effort.

These are “communities of mission practice,” the intersection of passionate U.S. Presbyterians, global partners and World Mission personnel in work shaped by prayer, Bible study, reflection and worship. Diverse perspectives are bound by

a common purpose and values, sharing knowledge and practice to spur one another on not only in faithfulness to God’s mission but in effectiveness as well.

In 1837, the Presbyterian Church’s Board of Foreign Mission sent mission workers to Brazil, Congo, Egypt and China to plant church communities. Thousands came to faith in Jesus Christ.

By the middle of the 20th century, the developing (colonized) world clamored for self-determination. Our church discerned a movement of the Spirit and reformed policy: the PC(USA) pioneered partnerships with national Christians, as mission workers shifted from an exclusive focus on direct service to one of equipping the local church to feed, heal and proclaim the gospel. Churches grew.

With globalization, U.S. Presbyterians’ awareness, communication and travel increased. The good news: this seismic shift opened the door to direct involvement and giving at unprecedented levels, transforming individuals and congregations. But our global partners note that our efforts have become highly uncoordinated and, in some cases, less responsive to needs as perceived by the local community.

We believe the Spirit is again calling us to consider new ways of being a connectional church. Because God speaks to people in every place, we cultivate mutuality with the global church. Because mission is critical to Christian unity, we work with ecumenical partners, too. “Communities of mission practice” are the intentional response to God’s call, creating and nurturing spaces of discernment and discipleship that transcend national borders.

Today almost 200 mission co-workers serve in more than 50 countries, bearing witness to Christ’s good news in word and deed. Together with our global partners and Presbyterians like you, World Mission is tackling some of the world’s most pressing problems for a long-term, systemic impact: to lift people out of desperate poverty, empower the global church to reach more people with Christ’s message of love, and facilitate reconciliation in violent places. This holistic approach seeks abundant life both now and in eternity. You can be a part of new and existing communities of mission practice by engaging with World Mission. May it be so.

Grace and peace,
Hunter Farrell
Director, Presbyterian World Mission

Mission Crossroads is a General Assembly Mission Council publication about the church’s mission around the world.

Presbyterian World Mission is committed to sending mission personnel, empowering the global church, and equipping the PC(USA) for mission.

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ABOUT THE COVER

Mission co-workers Nancy and Shelvis Smith-Mather are welcomed by South Sudanese as they begin their ministry.



General Assembly
Mission Council

New beginnings

Presbyterian mission co-workers complete orientation for service in Latin America and Africa

Four newly appointed mission co-workers completed orientation in January 2012 in preparation for Presbyterian World Mission assignments in the Dominican Republic, Brazil and Madagascar.



Jenny Bent and Mark Hare, Dominican Republic/Haiti
Dominican Evangelical Church/Mouvman Peyizan Papay
Health consultant (Jenny), agricultural technician (Mark)
Home churches: Moravian Church in Nicaragua (Jenny), Amesville (Ohio) Presbyterian Church (Mark) www.pcusa.org/mark-hare-and-jenny-bent (E200356, D506419)

Jenny Bent will serve in the Dominican Republic, where she will be a consultant with the Evangelical Dominican Church’s health ministries. Her assignment will focus on the Dominican church’s work in sugar bateyes, company towns where a large number of Haitians live and work. Jenny joins her husband, **Mark Hare**, in Presbyterian mission service. Since 2004, Mark has been an agricultural technician in Haiti with the Mouvman Peyizan Papay (MPP), a grassroots movement that helps small farmers work together to improve their living conditions.



Rev. Gordon and Dorothy Gartrell, Brazil
United Presbyterian Church of Brazil
Church planters/trainers
Home presbytery (Gordon): Western Kentucky
Home church (Dorothy): Columbia Presbyterian Church, Decatur, Georgia.
Previously served in Brazil from 1990 to 2008.
www.pcusa.org/gordon-dorothy-gartrell. E200489, D506355

Gordon and Dorothy Gartrell have returned to Brazil to work in church planting and evangelism with the United Presbyterian Church of Brazil. The couple served under mission appointment in a similar ministry from 1990 to 2008 with the Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil. They will aid the church growth efforts of the United Presbyterian congregation in Sacramenta Belem, help develop plans for church planting and facilitate evangelism training with the Erasmo Braga Presbytery.



Jan Heckler, Madagascar
Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar
Associate for planning, training and development
Home church: North Decatur Presbyterian Church, Decatur, Georgia.
www.pcusa.org/jan-heckler. E200490, D507556

Jan Heckler has been appointed to serve with the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM) as an associate for planning, training and development. The church is involved in a variety of ministries, including health and rural development, evangelism, environmental concerns, HIV/AIDS prevention, Christian education and leadership development. Jan has been invited to help its wide-ranging ministries be even more effective. She will assist with planning, goal setting, assessment and resource allocation. Jan has several years of experience working in education, public health, mental health and social service positions in Georgia and Florida.

World Roundup

By Catherine Cottingham

Presbyterian World Mission brings God’s global family together to heal the wounds of poverty and violence and proclaim God’s saving love in Jesus Christ.

With almost 200 mission workers in over 50 countries, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been sending mission co-workers around the world continuously since 1837. The year 2012 celebrates this 175th anniversary of international mission by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.

World Mission needs your support

World Mission continues to advance as the preferred mission-sending agency for hundreds of Presbyterian congregations across the country, and relies on the generous, over-and-above giving of our congregations and individuals in order to send and support these committed mission workers. If your congregation would like to become a sending congregation for one of our almost 200 mission workers around the world, please contact Bruce Whearty at bruce.whearty@pcusa.org or Chris Roseland at chris.roseland@pcusa.org.

“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”—Matthew 28:18-20

God’s mission in Asia

LAOS

Paul Friesen, regional liaison for Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, tells about a growing partnership in Laos. Lao Partners, a ministry of University Presbyterian Church in Fresno, California, has joined with the Lao Evangelical Church (LEC)—the largest Christian church in Laos—to provide medical care and equipment, English language classes and church leadership training. In 2008 they began to address the need for clean water for drinking and food preparation by working with Living Waters for the World (LWW), developer of a simple, effective, low-cost water purification system that is easily installed and maintained in remote locations. In 2009 their team worked with the staff at the Luang Prabang Teachers College to install the first LWW water purification system in Laos. Installing the system at a teachers college whose students come from all over

Laos helped to pave the way for future LWW installations throughout the country. Last November a third installation project was undertaken in a village where there are very few Christians and no church. In keeping with LEC’s evangelistic goals, Paul says, this remote community will be impacted with the gospel. Read more: www.pcusa.org/friesen-fall2011



THAILAND

Esther Wakeman and her husband, Rob Collins, were featured on the national Thailand TV show “I Love Thailand.” This program finds and highlights foreigners who speak Thai well and who love things Thai. The producers were interested in Esther and Rob because of their involvement with the Christian Communications Institute (CCI) and traditional Thai drama. Esther is interim director of CCI, which uses traditional and modern dramatic and musical arts to present the gospel in schools and villages all over Thailand. In the program Esther had an opportunity to say that the Christian faith is not a foreigner’s religion and that it is all about relationship—God’s love for humankind. The show ended with a prayer by Rob for Thailand.



Make this P.L.E.D.G.E. with World Mission

- **PRAY** each day with and for mission workers, for our global partners, and for the people they serve
- **LEARN** about mission workers’ ministries
- **ENCOURAGE** people to become long-term mission workers
- **DISCERN** where and how you can better serve God by serving others in mission work
- **GIVE** your time, love, energy, gifts and financial contributions
- **ENGAGE** in faithful and effective mission with mission workers by advocating for justice, sharing the good news of God’s love, and seeking reconciliation in the world

Mission co-workers are serving in the name of Jesus Christ around the world. Read more about any of the mission co-workers mentioned below by visiting www.pcusa.org/missionconnections and searching under “Find a mission worker.” To invite a mission co-worker to speak at your church or event, please contact Carol Somplatsky-Jarman at (800) 728-7228, x5826, or carol.somplatsky-jarman@pcusa.org.

Connect with mission co-workers at www.pcusa.org/missionconnections.

To support mission workers with your financial gift, visit www.pcusa.org/give or call (800) 728-7228, x5611.

God’s mission in Latin America

PERU

Rusty Edmondson reports: “The Presbytery of San Gabriel/Living Waters for the World team traveled to Peru last fall to complete a project/dream that had been set in motion over two years ago to install a water purification system with the people of Maynay. Like many rural, Quechua-speaking, indigenous communities in the Andes mountains, Maynay struggles with water-borne health issues such as parasites and hepatitis. For the celebration, the Maynay Presbyterian church members had decorated streets and city buildings with palm branches and ribbons. The mayor arrived and started the celebration with introductions and speeches. Children, released early from school, sang the songs they had learned about using clean water. Prayers were offered ... Clean water flowed into the awaiting cups of joyful people.” Read more: www.pcusa.org/edmondson-dec2011



BOLIVIA

Sarah Henken, regional liaison for the Andean region of South America, participated in an ecumenical panel in La Paz, Bolivia, on “Rethinking women’s participation in the church.” Women’s leadership in the church is relatively new in Bolivia, she says, and continues to face significant obstacles and resistance. “I was privileged to sit alongside Bolivian women who are leaders in Pentecostal, Lutheran, and Methodist churches and share our hopes and struggles together. All who were present told stories of faithful service and struggle, and it was deeply moving and energizing to be in that space together with other women who are passionate about their participation in the church.” Even in the churches in Bolivia that affirm women’s ordination there continue to be very few women pastors. Read more: www.pcusa.org/henken-dec2011



God’s mission in Africa

NICARAGUA

Tracey King-Ortega helped lead a two-day National Partnership Encounter with the Council of Evangelical Churches of Nicaragua last August. In attendance were 20 Nicaraguans from communities and churches across the country who partner with churches or presbyteries in the United States. The overarching theme was servant leadership. “It is so easy to get jaded by news of poverty and suffering,” says King-Ortega, “but when we do mission in a way that allows us to build a relationship, the statistics begin to have names and faces. We gain the perception necessary to understand what kind of love Christ is calling us to share. It becomes real and we are challenged to serve in new ways. When we are moved to serve, like the good Samaritan, we can dig deep and commit our own resources, but even he didn’t go it alone. He turned to the innkeeper to help care for the beaten man. This was a surprising message that spoke to me, that not only in mission (being transformed by God) but also in serving we are called to do this in partnership.” Read more: www.pcusa.org/king-ortega-aug30



CONGO



Larry and Inge Streshley are involved in the USHINDI project in eastern Congo, a consortium of local organizations working together to assist survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and educate communities on the rights of women. In 2011 the project helped 3,358 victims of sexual violence, 39 percent of whom were under 18 years of age. All the victims received psychosocial support. Approximately half received legal support, and 1,014 cases were taken to court. Because women who are victims of sexual violence are often ostracized by their families and communities and need a means to support themselves, this year the USHINDI project also provided training in a skill or trade, like sewing or soap making, to 5,261 women. Read more: www.pcusa.org/streshley-aug18

MALAWI

At the Limbe Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian, on the Sunday before Christmas, 98 new members were baptized. On Christmas Day, 19 infants were baptized to celebrate Christ’s birth. “These are signs of hope and trust for the future,” writes Kay Day. A record number of 161 Limbe youth participated in their annual retreat (for which they raised money in creative ways, such as a sponsored bike ride of 60 kilometers). “Their spirits are high and their commitment strong,” says Kay. On New Year’s Eve the church gathers for a night of prayer to thank God for the year past and for all that God has done, and to pray for God’s continued protection and provision in 2012—ending with a worship service on New Year’s Day. The same types of programs happen in churches all over Malawi. “No one is allowing the economy or politics or the weather to affect their praise of God for his provision or their trust in him for the future.” Read more: www.pcusa.org/day-dec2011

NIGER



Josh Heikkila, regional liaison for west Africa, reports: “In the region surrounding Maradi, Niger, the Evangelical Church in the Republic of Niger (EERN) has numerous congregations in villages where Christians are a very small minority. Often they are less than 2 to 5 percent of the population. In these villages the churches’ pastors and evangelists can be the only residents with a formal education. As a result, many people—both Christian and Muslim—come to them in order to learn to read and write. There is a great need for this in a country where the literacy rate is estimated to be only 29 percent nationwide. While almost none of these pastors and evangelists have training in literacy education, teaching people to read and write Hausa, the indigenous language of the region, has become a large part of their job. The EERN has even begun to see literacy education as an important means of evangelism.” Read more: www.pcusa.org/heikkila-dec2011

God’s mission in Europe

PORTUGAL

Bob and Keiko Butterfield, who serve in the town of Abrantes, say Portugal is a land of severe social inequalities. The rich are ostentatiously rich, and the poor, roughly 60 percent of the population, are painfully poor. Most of the members in their three churches are among the poorest. They are middle-aged women whose parents were agricultural laborers living on the edge of some landed estate. They never set foot in a school of any kind but helped their mothers at home until they were old enough to do farm chores. “Portugal is Catholic but seems only nominally Catholic, only culturally Christian,” Bob writes. “We ask that you pray for the whole country, which is going through a financial crisis, and especially for poor and middle-class Portuguese, who are bearing a disproportionate share of the burden of this crisis. Pray for the Catholic Church, that it might awaken to the gospel and proclaim it to the people. Pray for the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal as it struggles to reform itself.” In October the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal appointed Bob to two areas of responsibility on the national level. He codirects the Lay Theological Training Program and is solely responsible for monthly pastoral meetings held in each of three regions. Read more: www.pcusa.org/butterfield-oct2011 and www.pcusa.org/butterfield-advent2011



Communities of mission practice in Congo

By Jeff Boyd, Regional Liaison for Central Africa

Dear family, friends and supporters,

Back in 2007, I joined three members of First Presbyterian Church, Evanston, Illinois, when they traveled to Congo. We stopped at many Presbyterian primary and secondary schools and later facilitated a process through which Congolese educators and church leaders set their priorities to improve education in their schools: safe and durable infrastructures; textbooks for all teachers; in-service development for teachers and administrators; transportation for school supervisors; and better access to quality education for girls. Numerous visits have ensued to follow up on progress, review plans and share experiences.

This pioneer effort reinforces the endeavors of other Presbyterian groups accompanying our Congolese partners in their educational ministries. Myers Park Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, for example, has helped pay for a PC(USA) mission worker serving the education program of the Presbyterian Community in Congo. By supporting the educational ministries of its Nganza and Tshibaji counterparts, the Alabama Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley contributes to the priorities of the denomination as a whole. Presbyterian Women has awarded Birthday and Thank Offering grants to the educational programs of both Congolese partner churches.

Individual Presbyterians are also undertaking initiatives that range from fund-raising activities such as crocheting necklaces, organizing church fairs, and submitting proposals to Rotary Clubs, to advocacy, calling on the U.S. government to invest more in Congo's education sector and to bolster the Congo peace process.

Education has historically been a vital Presbyterian ministry in Congo. Today Presbyterians from Kentucky, Massachusetts, Oregon, Texas, and Virginia join those above to realize the educational goals of our Congolese partners. They belong to the Congo Education Excellence group (CEE), an important mission support network.

The CEE meets regularly by a conference call that also includes the World Mission Africa office, mission personnel and, logistics permitting, Presbyterian educators in Congo. Exchange visits help broaden perspectives while enlightening partners on donor standards for planning, accounting, evaluating and reporting as they seek to broaden their support base to face the daunting challenge of educating 207,000 students in more than 800 Presbyterian schools.

"Presbyterians Do Mission in Partnership" is the title of PC(USA)'s 2003 mission policy statement. The Congo Education Excellence group exemplifies

a contemporary model of how our connectional domestic church does international mission through internal and external partnerships.

And yet in recent years church mission activities have proliferated apart from denominational efforts. Presbyterian World Mission recognized potential in this changing landscape to engage Presbyterians to support our traditional mission partners and their programs.

"Communities of mission practice" such as the Congo Education Excellence group were introduced as a way to unleash that potential. World Mission considers a partnership to be a community of mission practice when each of three partner entities is represented: World Mission, a global PC(USA) partner, and Presbyterian constituents in the United States (like congregations, presbyteries, mission networks, validated and other constituent mission support groups), who all bring their passion and particular gifts into their partnership. Through communities of mission practice, Presbyterians do mission collectively!

All Presbyterian mission efforts in Congo converge into the Congo Mission Network, a large pool of U.S. Presbyterians who are involved with PC(USA) mission partners, be it in health, education, evangelism, or development. Recognizing the importance of education ministries in Congo, the October 2011 Congo Mission Network meeting centered on education.

Another example that illustrates communities of mission practice is the collaborative effort around the Christian Medical Institute of the Kasai (IMCK). The Medical Benevolence Foundation, Myers Park Presbyterian Church, World Mission, and the Mennonite and Presbyterian communities in the Congo have all demonstrated steadfast commitment to IMCK's health ministry. The circle is even larger, with scholarships for nursing students from New Castle Presbytery as well as Presbyterians writing newsletters, praying for the work, and financially supporting it.

At times health professionals share their expertise during a single mission trip, but American administrative skills do not automatically take root when transplanted to Africa. Rather, relationships need long-term dedication to weather different understandings and priorities. This is why, accompanied by mission personnel, Myers Park Presbyterian Church has already sent multiple teams with expertise in managing human and financial resources to better comprehend the Institution's

difficulties and to explore, with leadership from IMCK, the churches, and World Mission, effective approaches to face the challenges. Meanwhile, the Medical Benevolence Foundation is refurbishing the hydroelectric dam that provides water and electricity to the hospital and nursing schools.

This is how Presbyterian constituents, World Mission and our Congolese partners form communities of mission practice focused on education and health in the Congo. The "community" is diverse, and unity does not mean there is always agreement. Disparity in affluence and expertise can easily distort a relationship into one of dominance and dependency. That is why, as Presbyterian mission practitioners, we are bound by common principles of mutuality and respect as outlined in the 2003 policy statement.

Grace and peace,
Jeff and Christi

The Congo Mission Network is among more than 40 networks that connect Presbyterians who share a common mission interest. Most participants are involved in mission partnerships through congregations, presbyteries or synods. Network members come together to coordinate efforts, share best practices and develop strategies.



» Learn More

Contact Jeff Boyd at jeff.boyd@pcusa.org or Debbie Braaksma at debbie.braaksma@pcusa.org for more information

A community of mission practice is the common space between three or more groups including U.S. Presbyterians, Global Partners and World Mission.



Presbyterians in the Congo set strategic education priorities.

Belfast to border

Former Young Adult Volunteer Marie Kessler advocates for social justice in Tucson

By Judson Taylor

When you give to the Pentecost Offering, you're helping young adults discern their vocation to Christian service, including advocating for justice and human rights, thanks to the important work of the Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) program. This ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) offers life-changing opportunities in Christian service for young adults in the United States and around the world.

Marie Kessler first learned about the Young Adult Volunteer program as a college student when she worked at a Presbyterian conference center. "After meeting several young adults who had served at various YAV sites, I was confident I wanted to participate in the program after graduation," she says. "When I attended the YAV placement event, I became particularly interested in the work going on at both the Belfast and Tucson sites. Because I was drawn to international service, however, I discerned that Belfast would become my first placement."

In Belfast, Northern Ireland, under the direction of longtime mission co-worker and YAV site coordinator Doug Baker, Marie worked with both a Presbyterian church and a community center. These placements were located in a religiously and politically "mixed" neighborhood where Protestants, Catholics and non-religious people lived. "Many of the families I worked with were also from low-income backgrounds and lacked education and opportunities for advancement," Marie says. Her main responsibilities consisted of running after-school and summer programs for children and youth in this neighborhood. "I certainly can't say that I made any significant contribution to the peace process during my time in Belfast," Marie says. "However, I grew immensely through the process of learning about a country that has experienced a long history of sectarian violence. Doug provided me and my fellow volunteers with an amazing amount of guidance and mentorship around community building and reconciliation throughout the year."

After Marie's service in Belfast, she knew she wanted to pursue a career working with marginalized and low-income populations. "I had completed several internships with nonprofit organizations, and I was considering possible graduate school programs, but I was unsure how to proceed next," she says. "Gradually, I began to think about the Tucson YAV site again. I had experience working with migrant populations, and I felt particularly compelled to learn more about the struggles migrants were facing on the U.S.-Mexico border. After reconnecting with the site coordinator, Brandon Wert, I felt affirmed that I was being called to a second term as a YAV."

The Tucson YAV site seeks to serve faithfully along the U.S.-Mexico border. "Issues of globalism, U.S. economic and foreign policy and border security measures form the backdrop and context for all of our work," Brandon says. "Many of the placements in Tucson engage border/migration issues from a faith-based perspective. Volunteers lead education seminars to the border region introducing participants to the harsh realities of migration and the underside of global economics. Volunteers work to build communities of trust between workers and employers, residents and police, and neighbors new and old. Volunteers have served in northern Mexico, working alongside Presbyterians, Catholics and government officials on both sides of the border to address the often fatal consequences of human migration across the southwest border."

Many volunteers work to address economic realities of the poor impacted by the border by participating in home repair projects for low- and fixed-income residents in the Tucson Valley.

"Through their service, volunteers work alongside and serve people from a broad spectrum of social, theological and political views, creating one of the few opportunities left in our society to build authentic relationships across lines that divide conservative from liberal, rich from poor, citizen from immigrant, Republican from Democrat, Catholic from Protestant," Brandon says.

Other volunteers work at the Tucson Community Food Bank developing avenues for underserved and poorer populations to access fresh local vegetables. Through school gardening programs, farmers' markets and education programs, whole communities are empowered to produce and share a portion of their own food.

Volunteers also serve the homeless through several emergency service organizations, shelters, social service referrals and homelessness prevention programs.

"Over the past nine years, we have hosted 52 volunteers who have given over 96,000 hours of volunteer service to churches and nonprofit organizations in Tucson and in Northern Mexico," Brandon says. "Through the Volunteers Exploring Vocation curriculum, 19 alumni from our program have gone on to enter ordained ministry or are in seminary. Many others have discerned calls to long-term mission service, education, law and nonprofit community development work. Five volunteer alumni have recently begun their own intentional community here in Tucson in an effort to deepen their connection



to the communities they served as volunteers and to continue to explore the relationship between living in community and serving their larger community."

In Tucson, Marie served as a volunteer with the organization No More Deaths, a coalition of faith institutions, human rights groups and concerned individuals seeking to curb the increasing deaths of migrants in southern Arizona. Throughout that year, she coordinated volunteers, provided direct humanitarian aid to women and men in the desert, and helped to launch a public awareness campaign in the Tucson community. "During this time, I became more certain that I was being called to a career in social justice," she says. "I decided to attend law school with the conviction that a legal education would best prepare me to be an advocate on behalf of immigrants and others who face oppression in our society."

Although Marie enjoyed learning about the legal system as a student, she did not feel drawn to practicing law as an attorney. Before and during law school, she found she gained personal and spiritual fulfillment through relationships and human connections. "As a YAV in Tucson, I had learned about spiritual direction and discernment," she says. "Applying these tools, I came to realize that I wanted my vocation to involve more collaboration and community building than simply representing clients in legal proceedings. Today, I am fortunate to have joined the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona."

As the farmers' market manager, Marie supports small farmers and works to increase access to nutritious food among low-income populations. "I have the joy of connecting with families, farm workers and fellow community advocates to work toward a

more just food system and local economy," Marie says. "I'm grateful that my experiences as a YAV helped to lead me to a place where I am able to combine my gifts and skills with my other loves and interests."

Combining opportunities of mission service with mission learning often leads to important vocational discernment that young adults carry with them into their careers and throughout their lives. "The focus of the YAV program is on partnership and relationships," says Shannon Langley, coordinator for young adult and national volunteers at the PC(USA). "Effective mission has to be something that is mutual." Marie's YAV experience exemplifies both the effectiveness of the YAV program and the value of supporting it through the Pentecost Offering.

"As a YAV in Tucson, I had learned about spiritual direction and discernment," Marie says.

Your gifts to the 2012 Offering will help the Young Adult Volunteer ministry area to:

- Enable 70 young adults aged 19–30 to serve as Young Adult Volunteers, working with and learning from our mission partners in more than 15 sites for one year, focusing on simple living and vocational discernment
- Help to support travel, living, and insurance expenses for YAVs
- Provide funding for a year-end retreat that prepares YAVs to integrate their mission experience into their life after service—which, for a third of YAVs, involves ordained ministry

» Learn More

Learn more about Marie and the Pentecost Offering at www.pcusa.org/pentecost

Risky journey

Presbyterian mission co-worker Doug Tilton stands with African partner church in time of need

By Pat Cole

Presbyterian mission co-worker Doug Tilton didn't know what to expect when he arrived in Antananarivo, Madagascar, in June 2009.

Tilton would be attending a national meeting of the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar just three months after a military-backed coup had sent the country into chaos. Security forces from the new government had arrested and beaten pastors and other church leaders. As a result, many pastors went into hiding, and one church official left the country temporarily. Some remained in hiding the day Tilton arrived, and the tension was still thick.

As the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s regional liaison for southern Africa, Tilton goes to many church meetings. In this case, his hosts thought his attendance would be particularly beneficial. They surmised that his presence would make it less likely that church leaders would be arrested or harmed.

The meeting was held without incident, but Madagascar's political and economic crises still persist. Human rights violations also continue, and in response the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar, known by its Malagasy acronym FJKM, is pushing for a return to democracy. Presbyterians in the United States, including the Madagascar Mission Network, are supporting the FJKM.

"We hear constantly from the FJKM that the most important thing to do is to pray for peace, justice and for the health and discernment of the church in Madagascar," Tilton says. "It's also important that we engage in advocacy with U.S. officials."

FJKM leaders hope that a "roadmap" brokered by a delegation from the Southern Africa Development Community will provide an effective pathway toward the restoration of democracy and human rights. Meanwhile, there continues to be great concern for the safety of FJKM pastors and other church leaders.

As Malagasies seek to cope with severe economic hardship, many of them turn to the FJKM for help. "It's a church that expresses well the concept of holistic ministry," Tilton says.

The FJKM is heavily involved in community and economic development, agricultural work, environmental reclamation, and health ministries and also pursues a vigorous program of evangelism and church planting. Over the past decade, it has planted more than 500 congregations, averaging approximately one new church start each week.

The FJKM is assisted by mission co-workers Dan Turk, a forester and agronomist, and his wife, Elizabeth, a public health specialist. Newly appointed mission co-worker Jan Heckler will assist with long-range planning, assessment and resource allocation.

The FJKM is one of nine partner churches with which Tilton works. Based in South Africa, he also supports the ministries of other mission co-workers and helps build partnerships between African Christians and Presbyterians in the United States.

"I am filled with wonder at the creativity and diversity of God's creation and at God's perpetual capacity to do new things in the lives of God's people," Tilton says.



Doug Tilton (right), PC(USA) regional liaison, and Pastor Lala Rasendrasasina, president of the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar, at a meeting of Malagasy church leaders

Fruitful ministry

Protecting Madagascar's people and environment

By Doug Tilton, Regional Liaison, southern Africa

In the midst of political and economic turmoil, the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar is working to make the gospel's promise of "life in fullness" a reality 300 miles off Africa's southeastern coast. The Reformed denomination known by its Malagasy initials, FJKM, boasts nearly four million members, making it one of the island's largest churches. The world's fourth largest island is home to approximately 20 million people, roughly half of whom are Christians.

The past three years have been difficult for the people of Madagascar. In March 2009, a military-backed coup d'état led by the mayor of the capital city, Antananarivo, ousted the country's popularly elected president (who also happened to be a senior official in the FJKM) and shut down the country's parliament and other democratic institutions. Eight years of steady economic progress came to an abrupt end. In protest, many nations, including the United States, withdrew much of the bilateral support on which Madagascar's public sector depended. Millions of Malagasy people, who had already been struggling to get by, slipped into destitution. Madagascar became one of the world's most food-insecure nations virtually overnight.

Through its development department (known as SAF), the FJKM has programs in health care, water

and sanitation, and disaster relief, and an environmental program that seeks to protect Madagascar's unique biodiversity. One of its goals is to help rural communities to develop sustainable livelihoods that do not rely on the exploitation of indigenous trees. For the past decade, SAF nurseries have been propagating a wide range of indigenous and imported fruit trees and introducing them to Malagasy farmers, both to promote improved nutrition and to stimulate income generation.

In late 2010, SAF identified the tiny village of Antanetibe as an ideal area for growing tangerines and other fruit. The community nominated two people for training, which generated such enthusiasm that SAF was asked to provide it for the entire village. In February 2011, SAF distributed 315 citrus trees, showing families how to plant and care for them. Villagers decided to invest in more trees and set up a nursery, yielding more than 1,300 trees within eight months. The farmers had also worked



Antanetibe residents with their new fruit trees

together to dig an elaborate system of ditches, allowing all of the fields to be irrigated by a nearby water source.

SAF visits encouraged the villagers and reinforced their sense of the church's accompaniment. It allowed the farmers to consult on agricultural issues, while enabling SAF to engage in some environmental education and distribute new varieties of fruit trees—including grafted peaches, nectarines and persimmons, as well as Brazilian cherries and jabotacaba—to see how they would fare in that area.

The people of Antanetibe and SAF's environment team share a common vision: they hope that with cooperation, hard work and God's blessing, the community will become an important commercial fruit-producing region within the next decade. If they can realize this dream, the additional income will help to finance upgraded infrastructure, better education and other substantial improvements in people's lives.



Income from fruit production may soon pay her school fees.

A faithful witness in the midst of crisis

Democracy and human rights are conspicuous casualties of Madagascar's military-backed coup. Religious leaders who have spoken out in support of basic freedoms have also been victimized. More than 30 FJKM pastors and staff recently told visiting PC(USA) officials about the violence and intimidation that they have experienced.

Last year, Madagascar's illegal regime shut down dozens of independent radio stations. Security forces seized FJKM Radio Fahazavana's equipment and detained 10 journalists. Most of the broadcaster's 23 staff members have been unemployed since. While those arrested were ultimately released—most after spending four months in prison—their trials have been repeatedly postponed, leaving them in perpetual fear of rearrest. Indeed, most of the scores of people detained by the state for political offenses now live in this legal limbo.



Antanetibe residents have planted more than 1,300 fruit trees this year.

Pastors have also been attacked. Rev. Valisoa Rafanonerantsoa was arrested at a prayer service for peace, and security personnel kicked him repeatedly in his head and all over his body. "They said that they would make a sacrifice of me, and they shot next to my ears and my feet. They even stepped on my Bible, and I was not allowed to retrieve it," he said. Rev. Rinà Rasoanaivo told how soldiers shot her husband, Rev. Ranaivo Rivo Arson, as they walked on a public road to the same prayer service.

Others were forced into hiding. When the police attacked worshippers, Rev. Tiana Ranaivoniarivo sought refuge in a nearby police camp whose officers were [mistakenly] thought to be sympathetic to the church's peace efforts. When he and others tried to slip away from the camp, they encountered three government soldiers. "They pulled out their guns as if they were going to shoot us," Pastor Tiana recalled, "but when they saw me, they said, 'Oh, Pastor! We will not kill pastors, even

though we have been ordered to do so, because we are also FJKM [members].'"The soldiers ultimately helped him to escape, but he spent the next several months on the run and did not dare stay with his family.

The PC(USA) gives thanks to God for the FJKM's courageous witness and its commitment to restore democracy through peaceful means. Please pray for the church's continuing ministry to poor and marginalized people in the midst of great social and political upheaval.



Jose and Cyril, who received fruit tree training in July 2010, get new secateurs from SAF.



Collecting a harahara sample

Tracking the elusive harahara: conserving Madagascar's biodiversity

"We hope people will gain a fresh appreciation for the value of all of Madagascar's amazing indigenous trees"—90 per cent of which are found nowhere else in the world—says PC(USA) mission co-worker Dan Turk. Antanetibe's rare, slow-growing species of harahara, sought after for spade handles and firewood, has been exploited to the brink of extinction. This resident helps find and dig up root sprouts to be potted at one of SAF's nurseries, planted and protected from grass fires.



Marta and Tim Carriker have served in Brazil since 1977.

Expanding mission sending

Mission co-worker Tim Carriker helps Brazilians work across cultures

By Pat Cole

» Learn More

Support Tim and Marta's work in Brazil and read their letters at www.pcusa.org/tim-and-marta-carriker.org

Although Tim Carriker has spent his entire mission career in Brazil, this Presbyterian mission worker's influence is felt around the world.

Carriker arrived in Brazil in 1977 amid a growing surge of interest in international mission sending among Brazilians.

After six years in a church planting ministry, Carriker, working with the Brazilian partners, helped organize the Evangelical Missions Center in Vicosa. In those days opportunities for mission training were few in Brazil.

"They would basically give them two weeks of training and send them off," says Carriker, who serves alongside his wife, Marta.

In South America as well as Africa and Asia, the school's graduates have planted new congregations and developed new Scripture translations. It has been a model for other mission education programs. "Today there are more than 100 schools and mission departments in seminaries all over Brazil because of that one program that began nearly 30 years ago," Carriker says. The center educates students from the Presbyterian Church of Brazil and other denominations.

Carriker, who holds a doctorate in missiology and New Testament, left the faculty in 1992, but he continued to teach at other Brazilian schools during the 1990s. In 1999, the Carrikers began working

with the Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPIB). Tim serves as its coordinator of continuing education for pastors and as a missiological consultant. Marta assists mission teams from the United States who come to Brazil.

Though the IPIB supports only a handful of international mission workers, its leadership has asked Tim to help expand the church's mission outreach. Both domestic and international mission in Brazil require cross-cultural strategies and sensitivities, he says. "Brazil is culturally, economically and socially very diverse, which makes national ministries very cross-cultural in nature."

In addition to teaching and consulting, Carriker has helped prepare Brazilians for mission through his writing. He has authored nine books in Portuguese, mostly on mission topics, and he has edited several others. Currently he is general editor for a mission study Bible that will be published by the Brazilian Bible Society.

"It's the kind of thing we can do as missionaries," Carriker says. "Many Brazilians just don't have the time or the financial support that would allow them to do that."

The study Bible is a five- to six-year project, which he expects will be completed within the next year and a half. It will be a resource for mission leaders, pastors and lay people as they study what the Scriptures say about mission.

As Presbyterian World Mission celebrates its 175th anniversary in 2012, Carriker says that the same calling that nudged U.S. Presbyterians to share the gospel in other nations inspires Brazilians to work across cultures.

Presbyterians in Brazil realize they are heirs of a strong mission tradition that made its way to their country in 1859, Carriker says. "Every year they celebrate their own Reformation Day, the coming of North American missionaries." He adds that "there is a tremendous sense of accomplishment among Brazilians that they are now sending missionaries as well to other parts of the world."



Continuing a longstanding mission tradition in Brazil

The first Presbyterian missionary to Brazil, Ashbel Green Simonton, sensed a call to international mission after hearing a chapel sermon at Princeton Theological Seminary. He went to Brazil in 1859 shortly after his ordination.

More than 150 years later, Presbyterian World Mission continues ministry in Brazil through its partnership with Brazilian churches and institutions, its facilitation of the Brazil Mission Network and through sending mission personnel who serve at the invitation of partners.

In addition to Tim and Marta Carriker, six Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission co-workers serve in Brazil:



Gordon and Dorothy Gartrell. The Gartrells work in partnership with the United Presbyterian Church of Brazil in Belem in ministries of church planting and leadership training. They are helping a small church grow through a ministry of leadership development. Once that church is stronger, they will begin work

in church planting. Read more at www.pcusa.org/gordon-and-dorothy-gartrell.org



Farris and Thelma Goodrum. The Goodrums serve in Vitória at the Center of Theological Formation Richard Shuall, a ministry of the United Presbyterian Church of Brazil. They teach Christian education, administration, evangelism, music and pastoral ministry. Read more at www.pcusa.org/farris-and-thelma-goodrum.org



Joshua and Kim Vis. The Vises serve at the Ecumenical Institute of Post Graduate Studies in São Paulo, where Josh teaches biblical languages and literature to future church leaders. The school is one of the few institutions in the region that offers a doctoral degree in theology. Read more at www.pcusa.org/kim-and-josh-vis.org

Mission in every pew

One church’s commitment to outreach begins in the sanctuary and extends across the globe

By Toni Montgomery

Mission is a big part of the identity of First Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville, Illinois. To be reminded of the focus on mission, members and visitors need look no further than the *Presbyterian Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study* in each pew.

“We include at the top of every bulletin a biblical text, a meditation for people to center their thoughts, and also the page in the *Mission Yearbook*,” says the church’s pastor, John Kay. “Everyone gets a bulletin, and every bulletin has that day’s reference, encouraging them to pick up the *Mission Yearbook*.”

Kay credits former pastors and members and the church’s mission committee for deciding to use the yearbook to highlight mission. “It’s a pattern I inherited, but we’ve kept it up,” he says.

When visitors comment on the yearbooks in the pews, Kay tells them, “This is a part of who we are as Presbyterians. We’re concerned about the world in which we live.”

The real focus for Kay and the members of First Presbyterian is on what the books represent.

“I think the *Mission Yearbook* serves as an ongoing visible symbol of the importance of mission at home and abroad,” Kay says. “The *Mission Yearbook* is one part of what we do, but we have other ways to build on that and try to make more personal our commitment to mission here and around the world.”

Connecting near and far

Global mission is a special emphasis at First Presbyterian, thanks in large part to unexpected connections formed years ago.

The church helped found nearby Illinois College and maintains a strong relationship with the school. About 55 years ago, a student from Thailand, Amnuay Tapingkae, came to study at the college. The school paid his tuition, and the church agreed to support him with room and board. Tapingkae went on to get his doctorate and eventually became the president of Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Payap is “a significant educational institution and strongly influenced by the Presbyterian mission heritage,” Kay says. The university has a relationship with the Church of Christ in Thailand, a mission partner of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

While Tapingkae was in Jacksonville, he became friends with many members of First Presbyterian Church, including a young man named Kenneth Dobson, who went on to become a missionary in Thailand. Now Dobson has retired and is still living

in Thailand, while another couple who worked as missionaries at Payap University have moved to Jacksonville for their retirement.

“These connections do wonderful things for a

‘This is a part of who we are as Presbyterians. We’re concerned about the world in which we live.’ —John Kay

congregation because they make that distant land seem so real and so personal,” Kay says.

Groups from the church have gone on mission trips abroad, including a trip to Thailand 10 years ago. Kay met Tapingkae in Thailand and invited him to visit Jacksonville on an upcoming trip he was planning to the United States. While visiting Jacksonville, Tapingkae arranged for a young Thai woman to study at Illinois College, just as he had done many years before.

The Jacksonville church also has a long history of mission work close to home.

“This congregation started the first kindergarten in the city of Jacksonville more than 50 years ago,” Kay says. Since then, the kindergarten has been transformed into a preschool but is still a means of outreach to local children.

The church building also houses a day care center—the only such facility in Jacksonville when it opened 27 years ago. “It’s intended to meet the needs of children who have working parents,” Kay says. “A particular emphasis for us is to care for children whose families are underprivileged or who are living on the margins.”

Budgeting for mission

When it comes to supporting mission projects financially, the members of First Presbyterian take their responsibility seriously. For the last eight years, the church has dedicated a proportion of its budget to mission.

“Families decide what proportion of household income they are going to give to the church,” says Kay, “so the church should consider what proportion of its income to give to mission around the world.”

The congregation set a goal: to give 20 percent of

the church budget to mission. In order to get there, the amount going to mission would increase by 1 percent, or at least \$5,000 each year—a significant challenge.

“First Presbyterian Church of Jacksonville is one of our best mission partners,” says Sue Krummel, executive presbyter for the Presbytery of Great Rivers. “They contribute funds that are used at the presbytery, synod and General Assembly level, as well as supporting mission projects that they identify. They are certainly one of the leaders in our presbytery in

The congregation set a goal: to give 20 percent of the church budget to mission. In order to get there, the amount going to mission would increase by 1 percent, or at least \$5,000 each year—a significant challenge.

helping us to bring hope in the name of Jesus Christ every hour, every day.”

Kay says his congregation has been blessed in that even in harsh economic times, it hasn’t had to reduce its budget. “We thought maybe we should recognize this is a hard time and ask for less—go for



half a percent this year,” says Kay of the discussions he had with members of the church’s annual stewardship campaign in setting the goal for mission giving in 2011. He was surprised when the chair of the finance committee rejected this option.

Giving generously to mission beyond the church walls is not just history or the vision of a few. “In large measure it seems to be embraced by the congregation,” Kay says. “I am more than happy to put my weight behind it and support it, but this is not something a pastor does—it’s something a congregation does. And it makes my heart grateful to be a part of a congregation that has this history and continues to endeavor to be faithful to it.”

Toni Montgomery is a freelance writer in Statesville, N.C., where she is also secretary at First Presbyterian Church. This article is an adapted version of her story published by Presbyterian News Service in March 2011.

A RESOURCE for mission

The *Presbyterian Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study* is a key resource for helping congregations strengthen their commitment to mission. This book of daily prayers, lectionary readings and stories is published annually and is packed with information about the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) overseas and across the United States. To order copies of the book or to get daily readings by podcast, email or RSS feed: www.pcusa.org/missionyearbook

Technology helps connect congregations to mission worker in Malawi

A letter from Kay Day in Malawi



Kay Day was appointed as a PC(USA) mission co-worker in 2009 and serves in Malawi at the invitation of the Blantyre Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian. She is the synod chaplain, a companion and minister to fellow ministers who each serve (due to a severe clergy shortage) an average of four congregations. She also prepares continuing education opportunities for ministers in the synod. In addition, Kay is the administrator of the Chigodi Women’s Centre and serves as facilitator for the Blantyre Synod partnership with the PC(USA)’s Pittsburgh Presbytery.

Dear family and friends,

This month I have been reminded of how connected we are in the body of Christ because of the gift of technology. On World Communion Sunday, fittingly, God connected the church I am serving now with the church I last served in Pittsburgh, Mt. Pisgah. It was humbling. As a surprise to the Mt. Pisgah congregation, their pastor and I arranged for a Skype connection during their worship. A session clerk from Limbe planned to join me here, to make the connection church to church. On Saturday before the Skype, I learned that church representatives would be coming on Sunday afternoon for a manse visit—to bring food and encouragement to the pastor. I explained the Skype conversation scheduled for 4 p.m., and he assured me the group would come early in the afternoon. They arrived at 3:30.

At that point God made his plan clear. I explained the Skype call, and the group eagerly agreed to be a part of this world connection. They had come for one purpose, but in perfect time to be a part of the body of Christ. The visiting pastor at Mt. Pisgah had only told the congregation that there was a special greeting for World Communion Sunday. They thought it was his wife from Spain. When I appeared on the big screen the church uses for the worship service, someone in the congregation let out a whoop that folks on both sides of the ocean heard. I gave greetings, made a few remarks, did introductions and took a few questions, and then we sang a chorus we had prepared for them. Mt. Pisgah cheered and then responded by singing the doxology for us. The folks here joined in and together we praised God, although 10,000 miles apart. It was a powerful, spontaneous moment. After the pastor prayed, we said our goodbyes. As we disconnected, the organist played the introduction to the next hymn, “In Christ There Is No East or West.” How true! We had just experienced it.

That was reinforced this past Sunday when five young people from Limbe connected with 14 young people from Wycliffe Presbyterian Church in Youngstown, Ohio, via Skype, as these young disciples learned about how God is working on both sides of the Atlantic. They asked questions, shared interests, and began friendships, sharing favorite Bible verses with each other. They plan to connect again in November to build the relationship.

On both occasions folks were delighted to celebrate the Body of Christ around the world. We praise God for connecting us in Spirit, and by electronics. Ours is an awesome God, in whom there is no east or west, but one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth. I pray you have experienced that this month as well in your own ways.

Yours in Christ’s love,
Kay

» Learn More

Support Kay and read her letters at www.pcusa.org/kay-day

Park at The Junction

New website helps coordinate mission trips, events for greater impact

By Judson Taylor

If you are looking for a mission trip opportunity for your group and need some inspiration and information, or if you have a mission trip or mission-related event you want to promote, The Junction is your one-stop shop for getting and sharing details about what’s happening in global mission. The Junction is a new online database that allows you to connect and serve with churches, mid councils, individuals, mission networks, and others to post and search for information about upcoming mission trips and mission events.

“The Junction is simply a place to share about what’s going on in mission,” says Ellen Sherby, coordinator for Equipping for Mission Involvement. “People can use it to coordinate their trips or events, or they can use it to find a trip to go on or an event they want to go to. This could be helpful especially for people who want to go on a mission trip when their church for whatever reason doesn’t have a group that’s going somewhere. The Junction can help them find a trip they can join.”

Mission trips

Visit www.pcusa.org/thejunction and type in the kind of mission trip you are looking for to find a list of trips that are scheduled. You can find out where people are going, what kinds of mission work they will be doing and coordinate your own mission work to avoid duplication and increase the likelihood of collective, transforming impact.

The Junction is also a good place for people who feel that God has placed mission on their heart, but they don’t know where to start. Peruse the events and mission opportunities and connect with others who can help you discern where God is calling you to serve.

Mission events

Promote a mission-related event like a conference, consultation, fair or mission network meeting at The Junction. Or use it to announce that you are willing to host traveling church groups in town for a mission study group tour, conference or camp cleanup.

Resources

Presbyterian World Mission also produces other print- and web-based resources to help you get ready to go on a mission trip, as well as to reflect on how to do mission faithfully and effectively in partnership with God’s people worldwide.

Mission Trips website—General information on trips, tools for trip leaders and places to serve in the United States and around the world. Visit

www.pcusa.org/missiontrips

Mission Trip Tip Sheet—Includes sections titled “Discerning Your Congregation’s Call,” “Assessing Your Congregation’s Global Mission Involvement,” “Presbyterians Do Mission in Partnership,” and “Google Me a Mission!” Download at www.pcusa.org/tooltrips

Mission Crossroads website—An interactive online faith community dedicated to helping you engage in God’s mission around the world. Share and discover mission stories, resources, best practices and concerns. Visit www.missioncrossroads.org

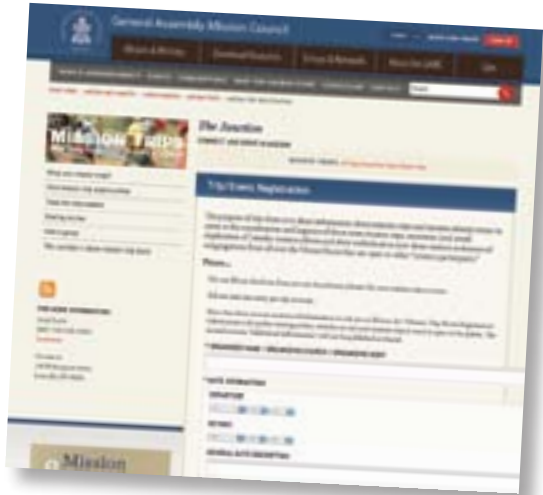
God’s Mission Matters podcast—Hear insights from mission workers and from Scripture based on a guiding “tip of the month” for mission involvement. Find transcripts of the conversations, a study guide, devotions and activities to accompany that month’s theme. A companion webinar series features expert panelists, Q & A and live presentations. Available at www.missioncrossroads.org; click on the “podcast” tab.

World Mission country web pages—Learn about a part of the world that God has put on your heart. Start at www.pcusa.org/map to find mission workers, partner organizations and the history of the PC(USA) in particular countries.

Print resources, available for purchase at www.pcusa.org/store, include:

When God’s People Travel Together—a three-volume resource for mission trip leaders. Includes a planning manual, guide for reflecting and acting on mission trips and Bible studies for mission. \$20 (PDS 2435807014)

Faith in Action—How can we best allocate our funds and resources toward meeting the critical needs of the world today? Former PC(USA) mission worker Stephen Knisely proposes three biblically grounded models of development ministries and asks crucial questions. \$15 (PDS 7440000022)



» Contact

Andy Rector (national short-term trips) at andy.rector@pcusa.org

South Sudan odyssey

Mission worker Sharon Curry begins ministry



By January 2012, at least 150 people, mostly women and children, were reported killed after fleeing attacks by fighters from a rival ethnic group. The government of South Sudan declared Jonglei a disaster zone and asked humanitarian agencies to accelerate life-saving assistance.

Visit www.pcusa.org/southsudan for the latest developments. Pray for the PC(USA)'s South Sudan partner churches and organizations as they continue to provide a witness to the grace, peace and love of Jesus Christ during this crisis.

A letter from Sharon Curry preparing to go to South Sudan

October 2011

“See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared (Exodus 23:20).”

As we begin to enter the Advent season and a time of preparation for Christmas, I was thinking of Mary as she prepared for her journey to Bethlehem and the arrival of her son. I wonder: did she have the same worries I do?

I am reminded that Joseph and Mary didn't begin this journey without a little fear and trepidation. Neither Mary nor Joseph knew the reason why—they just trusted God and obeyed. That is a question I am asked frequently: “Why South Sudan?” I don't know why. I am just trusting God has his reasons, and I know this is one of those times in life that I will just trust and obey.

Another question I am asked is about being afraid. I know that this is not one of the safest places in the world for a single woman to be on her own. Part of serving in an unstable place is knowing that at some point I might have to be evacuated on short notice.

As I continue to read the story of Mary and Joseph, I am reminded that they too had to make a hasty retreat—pack up what they could carry and travel to Egypt. God provided for their protection, and I know he will provide for mine. I know that God is with me or I would not have been called to serve in Akobo. No. I am not afraid.

Sharon is evacuated

January 5, 2012

Nothing in my wildest dreams could have prepared me for my first two and a half weeks in Akobo.

This story begins shortly after Christmas with reports of intertribal fighting between two rival tribes in the Jonglei State in South Sudan. The Lou Nuer are from Akobo, where I am living, and the Murle are from an area maybe 100 miles south. Approximately 6,000 Lou Nuer descended on the Murle territory. The Nuer burned one entire village to the ground; women and children were kidnapped.

A few days later we heard reports that the Murle were involved in a revenge attack in West Akobo, about a day's walk for me. There were reports of which NGOs were evacuating and when, how and who. Everyone was worried about my safety.

I should say everyone but me! I was having the time of my life getting to know everyone in Akobo and finding my way around, proving that this American girl really can cook with a wood fire and trying to find my way to the latrine in the dark. I have been getting to know the women, laughing over my blundering efforts to learn their language.

It was with great joy in my heart that I watched hope bloom in the middle of this hard, dry, cracked ground that will someday be my home.

I had marched through the town with the elders, leaders and youth of the church, singing and dancing, and we gathered on Christmas morning to worship the “the new baby Jesus.” I was a part of their annual baptism—of 158 people, from teeny, tiny newborn twins, to an elderly lady leaning on her walking stick. I didn't realize how important it was to them until people stopped me on the road to say, “I saw you singing.”

The boys in the cattle camps across the way started to trust me enough to come close, and the girls laughed as they braided my hair one afternoon. And that is how in such a short time the people of Akobo came to be such an important part of my life and my heart.

I think I sat there in numbed shock as I heard the words, “We can't guarantee we can keep you safe. You should go now, while we can get you out.” I sat trying to hold back tears. I was on a U.N. flight out of Akobo the next morning.

Sitting in the sanctuary, offering up prayers of thanksgiving for all the ways I have been blessed during the past two weeks and for all the prayers



that have been and continue to be lifted up for me and the people of Akobo and Pibor, I picked up a songbook and found “Lord Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary.” I thought of all the people that are sanctuaries for me—the pastors, the friends, the family who give me strength and courage and who are the refuge in the face of storms, the wings that lift me, and the hearts that hold me in love, support and prayer. And I thought of the amazing, amazing job that the PC(USA) and [the Presbyterian

Church of Sudan] staff have done in keeping me safe, in preparing for any possible scenario and all their prayers along with so many others that I probably don't even know about.

So, as I sat in the quiet and peace of the sanctuary tonight, I prayed, “Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary” for the people of Akobo if they need refuge from the storms of the intertribal violence they are facing when I return. Lord, let me be the sanctuary to them that others have been for me.

Sharon Curry meets with women leaders of South Sudan.

A century of mission

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) celebrates more than 100 years of ministry in Sudan. Independence on July 9, 2011, gave the people of South Sudan a chance to chart their own future. Despite more than 50 years of civil war and an infrastructure that is in ruins, a sense of hope now pervades the people of South Sudan. The Republic of South Sudan began nationhood as one of the world's poorest countries, but it has a landscape with rich natural resources and churches with abundant faith. The PC(USA) is working with its partner churches and organizations, the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan (PCOS), the Sudan Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Nile Theological College, RECONCILE, Across, and the Sudan Council of Churches to help craft a brighter tomorrow for the people in South Sudan.

In addition to Sharon, the PC(USA) has the following mission co-workers in South Sudan:

Debbie Blane
www.pcusa.org/debbie-blane

Ingrid Reneau
www.pcusa.org/ingrid-reneau

Jacob and Aliamma George
www.pcusa.org/jacob-and-aliamma-george

Shelvis and Nancy Smith-Mather
www.pcusa.org/shelvis-and-nancy-smith-mather

Nancy McGaughey
www.pcusa.org/nancy-mcgaughey

» Learn More

Support Sharon and read her letters at www.pcusa.org/sharon-curry

Global kaleidoscope

By Catherine Cottingham

Christians leaving Iraq

Two of every three Presbyterian families have left Iraq since 2003, according to an Iraqi Presbyterian pastor visiting the United States in July 2011 for the Big Tent meeting. Two of five Presbyterian churches are now closed—one in Mosul and one in Baghdad. Before the war, Christians made up 4–5 percent of the Iraqi population, between 1.5 and 1.7 million people. Now there are 600,000–700,000 Christians. The rest have fled to surrounding countries and some to the United States and Canada.

Nuhad Tomeh, the PC(USA)'s regional liaison for Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and the Gulf, visited Iraq in November. He and other Iraqi church leaders expressed concern about the dwindling presence of Christians in Iraq, but a new (Assyrian Presbyterian) church is being opened in Erbil (in northern Iraq) with the permission of local officials. Read more: www.pcusa.org/tomeh-dec2011

A new class of Young Adult Volunteers

Sixty-six young people have begun a year of Christian service and learning as Young Adult Volunteers (YAVs) in eight U.S. cities and six countries around the world. The program provides opportunities for young adults (ages 19 to 30) to engage in the church's mission in communities of need, to develop leadership within communities of faith, and to explore their relationship and future ministry to the church. The 2011–2012 YAVs come from churches and presbyteries across the country, from Wyoming to North Carolina, and one from Ireland. Ten are non-Presbyterians. Meet the new YAVs at www.pcusa.org/newyavs

Dominican Republic partner aids Haiti relief

When the earthquake struck Haiti in January 2010, Marisol Baez left her family behind in the Dominican Republic and crossed the border into the afflicted country. She helped the Movement of Dominican-Haitian Women (MUDHA) organize an ambulance caravan of 120 doctors and volunteers—all Dominicans of Haitian descent or Haitian immigrants—treating wounds and saving lives. Marisol remained in Haiti teaching leadership and income-generating skills to women living in displaced persons camps, and empowering local peasant groups to lead their own rehabilitation efforts. MUDHA partners with PC(USA)'s Self-Development of People program.



Marisol Baez coordinated MUDHA's work in Léogâne, a town not far from the earthquake's epicenter.

Bringing the light

It seems natural that Christians are committed to bringing light to dark places without ongoing power. That's the mission of Solar Under the Sun (www.solarunderthesun.org), a ministry of the Synod of the Sun. Its solar-powered systems are custom designed to power the electrical needs of communities that need it the most. Working closely with sister organization Living Waters for the World (www.livingwatersfortheworld.org), a mission of the Synod of Living Waters, Solar Under the Sun also powers water treatment systems installed by LWW. In two years the program has been able to get onto the ground in Haiti, and in the next year it will go into places such as Kenya and the Ukraine. Read more at www.pcusa.org/bringing power



Light shed on human rights abuses in Brazil

Substantial information on torture and other human rights abuses was entrusted to the Brazilian attorney general in São Paulo on June 14, 2011. World Council of Churches General Secretary Fykse Tveit thanked ecumenical partners who gathered the court records for safekeeping, including two Presbyterians.

The Rev. James Wright and Charles R. Harper, both children of Presbyterian missionaries, spent years documenting the abuses in Latin America. Harper, World Council of Churches coordinator for human rights in Latin America from 1973 to 1992, is the author of *O Acompanhamento: Ecumenical Action for Human Rights in Latin America 1970–1990* (2006).

Many have called for the establishment of a national truth commission to shed greater light on events of the past, to explore the consequences of brutality, and to ensure justice for former victims.

U.S. and Cuba Council of Churches issue joint statement

The National Council of Churches in the U.S. and the Council of Churches of Cuba have issued a joint statement calling for reconciliation between the two countries and committing to “pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit that our churches may bear witness to God’s will for justice in economic life.” The statement raises three shared humanitarian issues: the 53-year-old embargo and its hardships for the Cuban people; the sentences meted out to the “Cuban Five” (jailed for 13 years after being convicted of espionage against Cuban-American dissidents in Miami); and the incarceration without trial in Cuba of Allen Gross, an American accused of smuggling illegal telecommunications equipment into Cuba last year. “We commit ourselves,” the statement says, “to advocate, even more assertively, for the normalization of relations between our countries.” Read more at www.pcusa.org/cubanchurches

Cuban church leader appointed to WCRC role

Rev. Dora Arce-Valentin, a leader in the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Cuba, was appointed in November to head the Justice and Partnership program of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). Arce-Valentin, who began her career as a civil engineer before switching to theology, was the first woman to serve as moderator of the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Cuba and taught at the Matanzas Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cuba. She began her new position in January 2012. The WCRC, which includes the PC(USA), was created in 2010 by the merger of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Council.

Northern Ireland: hope in the face of vandalism

Doug Baker, mission worker and regional liaison in Northern Ireland, shares the following story from Dr. Lesley Carroll, with whom he works closely and who has been a supervisor for PC(USA) Young Adult Volunteers for the past 12 years. Fortwilliam & Macrory Presbyterian Church in North Belfast has premises that straddle the so-called “peace line” between New Lodge and Tigers Bay. The congregation has been developing a Bricks to Bridges Project that focuses on restorative practice, training leaders and apprenticing young people in that practice. Plans had included a bike workshop for at-risk young people and a cross-community football club for primary schoolchildren. Then last October thieves broke in and stole copper piping, which resulted in extensive water damage. “The insurance will pay their part,” reported Dr. Carroll, “but what are we to do in the meantime? Let the young people roam? Send disenchanted leaders home? Wait another year for the insurance and builders? We dare not!” The congregation is determined to move forward in establishing a center for reconciliation. “We know there is a sense of ‘not enough to go around’, and so communities sink to taking what they can, never mind the cost to others. We intend to address that sinking feeling that leads to despair, hopelessness and ultimate damage to self and others.”

Mission worker contributes to book



PC(USA) mission worker Nancy Dimmock contributed to *Writing Out Of Limbo: International Childhoods, Global Nomads and Third Culture Kids* (Cambridge Scholars, 2011). Born in the Congo to Presbyterian missionaries, Nancy has served with Frank and their children throughout Africa.

Ways to give to World Mission

By Karen Gadson

Charitable gifts are the lifeblood of Presbyterian World Mission, helping to make possible the vital work of almost 200 mission co-workers throughout the world. The good news of Jesus Christ is best transmitted through human relationships—placing committed Christians in situations where the people around them can see what the gospel looks like when lived out in flesh and blood. Presbyterian World Mission has been doing just this for 175 years. Mission co-workers are sent out in faith that they will be lifted up, prayed for, communicated with and financially supported by Presbyterians back home. It is through this connectionalism that we are all active participants in God’s mission.

PC(USA) mission personnel are highly skilled individuals, carefully chosen and well trained. And all receive ongoing support and counsel from a staff experienced in cross-cultural, international mission.

Annual sending and support costs total \$83,000 for an individual and \$138,000 for a family. These dollars are used prudently to defray a variety of expenses, including salary, housing, transportation, health care and continuing education.

PC(USA) World Mission is deeply committed to being good stewards of the relationships we have built, the legacy we have inherited and the funds we receive. Presbyterians can give with confidence, knowing their gifts are wise investments in a ministry with a record of excellence and a commitment to a holistic understanding of the gospel.

Ways to give:

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FOR INDIVIDUALS

Please make your check payable to “Presbyterian World Mission.” All unrestricted gifts will be used to support the ministries of co-workers where the need is greatest. If designated for a specific co-worker, please include a note with the name of the co-worker or the co-worker’s account number on the memo line, beginning with the Extra Commitment Opportunity number.

FOR CONGREGATIONS

Congregations can send contributions through their regular receiving channels or to the address

above. Unrestricted gifts for General Mission Personnel should reference account number D500115. If designated for a specific co-worker, please include a note with the name of the co-worker or the co-worker’s account number on the memo line, beginning with D50.*

Those gifts designated to Directed Mission Support (DMS) accounts will be reported to your presbytery. We also request that you report DMS contributions directly to your presbytery in order to keep them informed of your denominational support.

*Mission co-worker account numbers can be found on the Mission Connections homepage of each co-worker at www.pcusa.org/missionconnections, as well as in the online Presbyterian World Mission Giving Opportunities booklet, www.pcusa.org/resource/presbyterian-world-mission-giving-opportunities-20. For personal assistance, please contact Nicole Gerkins in the Funds Development Ministry Office at the General Assembly Mission Council, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), at nicole.gerkins@pcusa.org or at (502) 569-5611. Nicole can also advise you of account information for mission personnel serving in sensitive locations.

Online:

www.pcusa.org/give

The quickest way to give to World Mission is online. It is fast, secure and easy to complete. You can make a one-time gift or set up a recurring monthly gift. This link is for unrestricted mission co-worker support, providing resources where the need is greatest. Should you want to designate your gift for a specific co-worker, simply scroll down the page: under Step 2, there is the option to designate.

Stock gifts:

For gifts of appreciated securities, the full market value of your stock is deductible and you will avoid all capital gains on your gift.

To transfer securities, please notify Terri Bate, director of Funds Development Ministry for World Mission, (330) 497-8683, with the following information: (1) the donor’s name, (2) the broker’s name and contact information, (3) the name of the stock(s), (4) the number of shares to be transferred, and (5) the intended gift purpose.

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#21-80-001-3931072
Bank contact: Mark Snyder, (502) 581-4669

Donors who wish to transfer stock that is held in physical certificate form should contact Terri Bate for instructions to mail them.

Mutual fund gifts:

Please contact Terri Bate for special gift instructions.

We also can be helpful in facilitating planned giving information, such as a charitable gift annuity or bequest in your will, through the Presbyterian Foundation.

World Mission Funds Development Ministry staff

Thank you for your thoughtful interest and support of World Mission. There are a myriad of ways to support the good work of our mission co-workers and church partners, including unrestricted giving to be applied where the need is greatest, support of a particular co-worker or region of the world, and support in behalf of one or more of World Mission’s three critical global issues—poverty, evangelism and reconciliation. We can be a helpful resource to both individual and church donors. For more information, if you are an individual donor, please contact the development manager for your region (Greg, Karen, Pam or René), and if you are inquiring on behalf of a congregation or presbytery, please contact one of the church support associates (Chris or Bruce).



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