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PCUSA Worldwide is a monthly e-mail newsletter about the international mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

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- **MUSLIM GROUP HELPS PAKISTANI CHRISTIANS REBUILD**

"There was not a dry eye at the table"

Around the table was an unusual group, at least for a Tuesday afternoon in Lahore, Pakistan: Muslim and Christian, American and Pakistani, men and women. What had brought us together was something that had driven many Muslims and Christians apart—the burning of several Christian churches and pastors' homes in Sangla Hill.

But we had gathered for a celebration, expressions of goodwill and gratitude. To a Pakistani-American woman, Nasim Khan, the thought that others would think that such behavior was typical, acceptable, or excusable to Muslims was a complete betrayal of her convictions about Islam. She and others had raised \$22,500 to assist in the rebuilding of the churches. She had brought the money to Pakistan personally to give to church leaders, and on behalf of other Muslims in northern Virginia to offer an apology to the Christian people of Pakistan.

Dr. Arthur James, moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan, said, "I have been in ministry for 50 years in this country. In that time, the majority [the Pakistani Christians' code word for Muslims] has done many things to hurt the minority [code word for Christians and followers of other religions, as well as unacceptable sects of Islam]. In all of that time, I have never had an imam, a single Muslim, come to me to say 'Sorry.' Today my faith in the goodness of the Muslim people has been restored."

Tears do not fall down the face of Pakistani men except on great and unusual occasion. But there was not a dry eye at the table that afternoon.—Robert Johnson, PCUSA mission worker

Read Robert Johnson's full letter at

http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/johnsonr/johnsonr_0603.htm.

MISSION WORKERS RETURNING TO HAITI

But WMD continues to advise volunteer mission groups not to travel there

The Worldwide Ministries Division (WMD) is allowing mission personnel who left Haiti last year because of rampant violence to return.

"After assessing the security situation in Haiti and conferring with our church partners there, we decided to allow our mission workers to return," says Bill Simmons, who chairs WMD's Security Team. "Violence in Haiti has subsided since elections were held in February."

Nevertheless, WMD is continuing to advise against volunteer mission groups visiting Haiti. When the situation stabilizes further, WMD will revisit this decision.

Read the full release at <http://www.pcusa.org/wmd/haiti.htm>.

CHRISTIANS SHARE A FAITH JOURNEY IN RUSSIA

Presbyterians engage in mission through "twinning" and other partnerships

Have you ever pondered the deep sense of God's call that gives a family the courage to uproot itself and be planted in a foreign land? A strange and difficult language, a demanding culture, different schools for the children, relationships with a church partner—these and countless other challenges must be squarely addressed for successful service. The [story of a Pennsylvania family's year in Russia](#) in the April 2006 issue of "Presbyterians Today" is just such a story of call, courage, challenge, and transformation.

In the 15 years since the breakup of the Soviet Union, PCUSA mission engagement in Russia has been grounded on four pillars: congregational partnerships or "twinning" with Russian congregations (Orthodox, Baptist, Lutheran and Reformed); support to theological/Christian education (seminaries, Bible institutes, schools and curriculum publishing); support to churches seeking to spread the good news to peoples who have not heard the gospel; and diaconal projects such as support to children and orphanages, HIV/AIDS education and prevention, medical outreach, and disaster assistance.—Gary Payton, PCUSA regional liaison

Read Gary Payton's column in *Presbyterians Today* at <http://pcusa.org/today/departments/inside/inside.htm>.

"VISIONS OF PEACE AND JUSTICE IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE"

Pre-Assembly conference scheduled

A pre-Assembly conference, "Visions of Peace and Justice in Israel and Palestine," will be held in Birmingham, Ala., on Thursday morning, June 16, prior to the convening of the General Assembly that afternoon. This educational event will share visions and perspectives regarding justice and peace in Israel and Palestine. It is not a forum for or against proposed items of G.A. business.

The program will include:

- A current assessment of human rights
- A panel of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian leaders sharing their visions for a just peace
- A description of Presbyterian ministry and mission
- Time for general discussion

For more information visit <http://www.pcusa.org/stepstowardpeace/>.

INDONESIAN TSUNAMI SURVIVORS AID KATRINA VICTIMS

Christian Science Monitor features Presbyterian-sponsored disaster survivors project

Eight Indonesian survivors of the 2004 Asian tsunami disaster came to the United States in March for a two-week tour of Gulf Coast areas devastated by last year's Hurricane Katrina. Their story was featured in the April 4, 2006, "Christian Science Monitor."

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) funded and hosted the group, which included both Muslim and Christian members. The visit allowed responders and survivors of both tragedies to work together and share stories of loss, hope and recovery. The visit included hands-on work at PDA volunteer villages in Mississippi and Louisiana as well as meetings with congregations and hurricane survivors.

Read the *Christian Science Monitor's* story at <http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0404/p01s03-ussc.html>

PRESBYTERIAN GROUP BACKS BILL CALLING FOR U.S. EFFORT TO STABILIZE CONGO

Some 31,000 are dying each month due to conflict and health/economic problems

The Congo Chicago Advocacy Coalition, an arm of the PCUSA's Congo Mission Network, is urging church members to lobby their senators to support a bill aimed at stabilizing Congo's precarious political situation. Some 31,000 die each month due to

civil conflict and the resulting health and economic problems. Almost 4 million Congolese have died since the beginning of the conflicts in 1998.

The group also wants the United States to send an envoy to try to negotiate peace in the troubled eastern part of the central African country.

The bipartisan Senate Bill 2125 would include a statement of 14 principles for U.S. policy regarding Congo, among them: providing for democratic elections; reintegration of indigenous combatants into civilian life; disarmament and repatriation of soldiers of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda; protection of vulnerable populations; monitoring of natural resources; and putting an end to the sexual abuse of civilians.

The fear is that the bill will be stalled in the Foreign Relations Committee unless it is viewed as urgent. Read the Presbyterian News Story at <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2006/06176.htm>.

AND MORE . . .

- **Highlights** is a twice-yearly print publication of Worldwide Ministries, available at no cost. To subscribe, go to <http://www.pcusa.org/wmd/list.htm> or call (888) 728-7228, ext. 5258. The Fall 2005 issue can be viewed or downloaded as a PDF from <http://www.pcusa.org/wmd/>.
- The **Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study** is available online month by month. Visit <http://www.pcusa.org/missionyearbook/index.htm>. Learn about and pray for the work of PCUSA mission workers both in the United States and overseas.
- A new video "**From the Heart**" introduces the background of the **Mission Initiative: Joining Hearts & Hands** campaign to raise \$40 million by 2007 for overseas mission personnel and church development in this country. The video is available at no charge in VHS or DVD format. Go to <http://www.pcusa.org/joiningheartsandhands/fromtheheartvideos.htm> to preview clips or request a copy.
- The **NetWorkers Mother's Day Project**, jointly sponsored by the International Health Ministries Office and Presbyterian Women, helps protect expectant mothers and children in Africa from malaria. Among children under age 5, malaria is the No. 1 cause of death in Africa. For information visit <http://www.pcusa.org/health/international/networkers-mothers-day.htm>.
- The Presbyterian News Service filed a number of stories from the **World Council of Churches** Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil. One reported that women (45 percent of the participants) were playing a prominent role in this year's Assembly. See <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2006/06090.htm>.

