

PCUSA WORLDWIDE newsletter
NEW MISSION PERSONNEL

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IN THIS ISSUE

- **SEVEN TO BEGIN OVERSEAS MISSION ASSIGNMENTS**
Two former Young Adult Volunteers are among new mission workers
- **UPDATE ON MIDEAST CRISIS**
Mission personnel reported safe; PDA sends \$50,000 for humanitarian aid
- **AFRICAN CHURCHES COMBAT THE AIDS PANDEMIC**
PCUSA partners empower youth and women, address stigma
- **AMY DAVISSON WRITES FROM THAILAND ABOUT "IDPs" IN BURMA**
Relief teams aid internally displaced persons fleeing to refugee camps
- **PRESBYTERIANS SUPPORT FRONTIER MISSION**
"Evangelism and witness" is a major focus for the PCUSA
- **MISSION NETWORKS AFFIRMED AT JULY CONFERENCE**
"The network experiment has been a great success"
- **AND MORE . . .**
Spring/Summer Highlights, mission story from Honduras, PCUSA staff member returns from Lebanon

SEVEN TO BEGIN OVERSEAS MISSION ASSIGNMENTS

Two former Young Adult Volunteers are among new mission workers

Seven new Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission workers completed orientation in July and will begin overseas assignments later this year.

- **BOB AND STACY BRONKEMA** have been appointed to serve in Russia at the Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy, an international faith community composed primarily of people from the developing world. Bob will be pastor and Stacy will also work in the congregation's ministry, which has a strong emphasis on social justice. Both are ordained Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ministers of Word and Sacrament.

The Bronkemas served as PCUSA mission workers in Italy from 1994 to 1998. In Italy they were co-pastors of four small Waldensian/Methodist churches and chaplains at an orphanage. Since 1998 Bob has been pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Palatka, Fla.

The Bronkemas will be accompanied by three daughters, Rachel, 10, Naomi, 8, and Bethany, 6.

- **SHANNON O'DONNELL** will serve at Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, an organization in Jerusalem engaged in ministries of publishing, hospitality, reconciliation, continuing education, interfaith dialogue and advocacy. O'Donnell will be an assistant to the director of the center. Her primary duties will be related to administration, research, information technology and theological reflection. She may also assist Palestinian Christians in community-building activities.

Currently O'Donnell is a program assistant in the PCUSA's Mission Personnel Relations Office. She served as a Young Adult Volunteer in 2004-2005 in Thailand, where she taught English.

- **CHENOA STOCK** will be a companionship facilitator in Sri Lanka with the Joining Hands Program, affiliated with the Presbyterian Hunger Program. She will help a network of grassroots organizations, non-governmental organizations, and religious bodies as they address hunger issues in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami. She will also help connect the Sri Lankan network with Presbyterian partners in the United States. Her position is funded by some of the tsunami relief funds given through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

Stock taught English in India for a year as a Young Adult Volunteer in 2004-2005. Since her return to the States she has been director of an after-school program for the YMCA in Pittsburgh and a preschool teacher.

- **THREE OTHERS** who attended last month's orientation have accepted frontier mission assignments in Asia. Their names and assignments cannot be released because of security concerns.

UPDATE ON MIDEAST CRISIS

Mission personnel reported safe; PDA sends \$50,000 for humanitarian aid

PCUSA mission workers and ecumenical partners in the Middle East did not suffer physical harm from the violence that gripped Lebanon, Israel and Palestine in July. "All our mission workers, partners and other colleagues are reported safe," reported Victor Makari, the PC(USA)'s area coordinator for the Middle East. "This includes pastors in southern Lebanon very close to the border with Israel."

Nuhad Tomeh, a PCUSA mission worker in Lebanon, was in the United States when the violence between Israel and Hezbollah broke out, but he is now back in Beirut assisting with relief efforts. He serves with the Middle East Council of Churches and is the PCUSA's regional liaison for Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and the Gulf region. Conditions in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, where four PCUSA mission workers and others related to the PCUSA serve, were reported to be calm.

On July 14 General Assembly Stated Clerk Clifton Kirkpatrick sent a letter to President Bush urging him to work with the United Nations and the Israeli government to find a diplomatic solution to the "spiral of violence" that threatens to erupt into all-out war in the Middle East. Read the letter and other related material at <http://www.pcusa.org/worldwide/lebanon/>.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance sent \$50,000 from One Great Hour of Sharing and designated funds toward a \$4.6 million Action by Churches Together (ACT) appeal for humanitarian assistance. Funds are being used to help sustain the lives of displaced persons and will include securing food supplies and supplementary nutrition for children; contributing to basic shelter by providing mattresses and beddings; enabling cooking by providing kitchen utensils; ensuring healthy surroundings through the provision of cleaning supplies, water tanks, and sanitary supplies for women and children. Updates are available on the PDA Web site, <http://www.pcusa.org/pda/response/middleeast/lebanon-index.htm>.

AFRICAN CHURCHES COMBAT THE AIDS PANDEMIC

PCUSA partners empower youth and women, address stigma

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) partners in Africa are working to "break the silence" surrounding HIV/AIDS. They promote prevention through education and economic empowerment programs and strive to address stigma. They have engaged ecumenically and with government entities locally and nationally.

Though working collaboratively with others is crucial, one thing our partners have recognized is the need to know their own communities, their own issues and weaknesses, and how HIV/AIDS manifests itself within their churches. For this reason each of our partner churches has a unique program that addresses its community's specific needs and embodies its strengths. Read more at <http://www.pcusa.org/aids-international/africanchurches.htm>

AMY DAVISSON WRITES FROM THAILAND ABOUT "IDPs" IN BURMA

Relief teams aid internally displaced persons fleeing to refugee camps

I ask you to pray for a good and just solution to end the war in Burma. And pray for people like 9-year-old Naw Eh Ywa Paw (whose name means "flower who loves God") and her family. Naw Eh Ywa was shot by the army. Her father and grandmother were killed and two of her relatives gave birth while in hiding from that attack on their village. All of this has happened since they fled from their homes in late March. Naw Eh Ywa has been treated by relief team medics, but the family remains in hiding and unable to return home.

Our relief teams help families like Naw Eh Ywa's escape to refugee camps. In recent months more than 20,000 people have had to flee. Entire families, from newborns to grandparents, move away from the land they know to a place that is foreign. They don't know what awaits them or how exactly their families will survive. But they move because surviving in their home has become, in many cases, impossible.

There are still more than 1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in eastern Burma. The rains have come early this year. Many of the IDPs have only the clothes on their backs and the few basket loads of things they could carry as they ran away.

Read Amy's June letter at

http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/davissona/davissona_0607.htm.

PRESBYTERIANS SUPPORT FRONTIER MISSION

"Evangelism and witness" is a major focus for the PCUSA

Presbyterians are continuing their longstanding heritage of sharing Christ's good news with people who have never before heard it. The church has 36 mission workers serving in frontier mission among 24 people groups in 15 countries.

The PCUSA's support of frontier mission is also carried out through grants to partner organizations. This extends the denomination's frontier work even further-to a total of 66 people groups in 40 countries.

A large number of PCUSA mission workers involved in frontier mission serve in the former Soviet republics of Central Asia. Many Presbyterians are unaware of this effort in Central Asia because security concerns necessitate that these efforts be kept low-key. But PCUSA mission workers serve with the blessings of the government officials who welcome the technical skills they bring to the region. They work in education, health care, economic development, and other fields, but in their free time they support the indigenous congregations that are beginning to take root.

PCUSA frontier mission personnel are also at work in other regions of Asia and in Africa.

-Adapted from the PCUSA's 2005 Annual Report, which is available online at <http://www.pcusa.org/annual>.

MISSION NETWORKS AFFIRMED AT JULY CONFERENCE

"The network experiment has been a great success"

Mission networks have proved to be a valuable component of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s international mission work, and their importance will grow, declared a PCUSA mission leader after a gathering of mission network leaders in Louisville in July. "The

network experiment has been a great success," said Will Browne, associate director for ecumenical partnerships, in an interview after the meeting. "Networks are here to stay to help the whole of the PCUSA engage in international mission."

Leaders of 20 of the denomination's 26 mission networks came together for the consultation. The number of mission networks has grown rapidly. Until four years ago there were only a handful of networks and similar organizations.

Mission networks are groups of Presbyterians who share a common interest in a country, people group, or programmatic emphasis. An outgrowth of mission partnerships developed by synods, presbyteries and congregations, networks provide a venue for partnership participants to relate to international partners, connect with PCUSA international mission staff and mission personnel, think about common strategies, coordinate efforts, and share best practices.

During the meeting mission network leaders began discussing the possibility of forming a formal association.

Read more about the mission network conference at <http://www.pcusa.org/wmd/mission-network.htm>.

AND MORE . . .

* The Spring/Summer issue of WMD's **HIGHLIGHTS** is available. Visit <http://www.pcusa.org/wmd/highlights.htm> to download the issue or subscribe. The cover story of this issue is "Renaissance at Forman Christian College." Also included is "Trinidad de amor"-Presbyterians in North Carolina, Guatemala and Malawi form a "triangle of love." Additional copies of the issue are available at no cost. Order item #74-950-06-001 from the PCUSA's Marketplace Web site, <http://www.pcusa.org/marketplace/index.jsp>.

* Tim and Gloria Wheeler, PCUSA mission workers in **HONDURAS**, tell the story of Crisanto Marquez, who is now able to make a living as a beekeeper. The Wheelers, who work in community development, have organized housing projects in which people build their own houses with the help of mission teams from the United States. Read their June letter at http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/wheelert/wheelert_0606.htm.

A PCUSA **NATIONAL STAFF MEMBER**, Elias Sahiouny, and his wife, Elian, were in Lebanon on vacation when the conflict between Israel and the Hezbollah erupted. Sahiouny, a native of Lebanon, is financial services manager for the PCUSA. Read about their long journey home at <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2006/06370.htm>.