

## **Peacemaking in southern Sudan**

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

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### **SUDAN WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS PRACTICE PEACEMAKING**

*Some 1,300 guns are laid down on the town square*

Last April I was ready to head up to Akobo, Upper Nile, with my colleague to do a workshop on trauma healing, reconciliation, and civic education. The mission plane was reserved, my bags were packed, and I was emotionally and spiritually "primed." But that afternoon I received a call informing me that two Presbyterian health workers were killed in Akobo.

In the aftermath of the Presbyterian health workers' deaths there were reprisals causing 15 more deaths. After this tragedy, the church and community leaders who had attended the RECONCILE (Resource Centre for Civil Leadership) workshop called a meeting to decide what they could do to address the crisis. They conceived and mobilized a grassroots program to voluntarily disarm the people of Akobo.

Rev. John Both, the pastor in charge of the Presbyterian Church of Sudan congregation in Akobo, said, "We got the idea for this plan from the workshop RECONCILE did for us." The workshop participants designed the plan, which was first shared with the local chiefs and headmen and then presented to the local commissioner, who gave it strong support. Some 1,300 guns were laid on the town square in Akobo! In that very tense situation God used the tremendous commitment of the church and community leaders as well as the meager "loaves and fishes" that we had offered-in the form of a five-day workshop-and it was enough!-Debbie Braaksma, Uganda/Sudan

Read Debbie's full November letter at

[http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/braaksmad/braaksmad\\_0611.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/braaksmad/braaksmad_0611.htm).

Based in Kampala, Uganda, PCUSA/Reformed Church in America mission workers Del and Debbie Braaksma serve in southern Sudan with RECONCILE, which is related to the New Sudan Council of Churches.

### **AID TO LEBANESE IN AFTERMATH OF WAR**

*PDA continues aid to struggling survivors of the conflict*

Last summer's Israeli-Hezbollah violent conflict left many Lebanese villages, roads, and lives destroyed. While the area is in some ways gradually returning to normalcy, many people are struggling with ongoing security fears and traumatic memories of the fighting. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) and the Church of Sweden are providing psychosocial rehabilitation to survivors of the conflict and especially to children who have returned to their communities.

PDA is also responding to Lebanon in partnership with the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), a long-term PCUSA mission partner, and as a member of Action by Churches (ACT) International. MECC and ACT assistance includes the distribution of food, blankets, hygiene kits, cooking utensils, heaters, other relief supplies. In addition repairs to schools, the re-establishment of the supply of water into many bombed-out villages, and land mine and unexploded ammunition clearance is a part of the response. Read more at [www.pcusa.org/pda/response/middleeast/lebanon110806.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/pda/response/middleeast/lebanon110806.htm).

### **INTERNATIONAL MISSION PERSONNEL ALMANAC OF FACES AND FACTS**

*New publication includes all current long-term international mission workers*

The 2006-2007 edition of this compendium of "faces and facts" has been mailed to all PCUSA churches. In it are photos of 292 mission workers and a brief description of their ministries-along with an indication of how individuals and churches can contribute to their support. The hope is that mission committees and sessions throughout the church will find the Almanac useful in encouraging understanding and support for these individuals and families as they follow their call to mission. Their ministries are diverse-teaching, healing, evangelism, community development, advocacy for the poor and

marginalized-as they work side-by-side with international partners to bear witness to the transforming love of God. The introduction to the *Almanac* says: "The future of the PCUSA's mission-sending ministry depends on your prayers and gifts. The impact of your support will literally be felt around the world."

A limited number of additional copies of the *Almanac* are available at no cost. Order item #74-950-06-002 from the PresbyterianMarketplace on the Web, <http://www.pcusa.org/marketplace/item.search.item.jsp>, or call PDS at (800) 524-2612.

## **MEDICAL PROJECTS OF PCUSA PARTNERS RECEIVE GRANTS**

*International Health Ministries announces its annual grants*

The annual International Health Ministries (IHM) grant process on behalf of health and development projects of overseas partner churches was concluded last summer. Ministries of healing, community development, and leadership training in nine countries received aid. Projects funded reflect the requests of overseas partners and the strategic focusing of resources on projects that address diseases of poverty and their underlying causes. The grants approved are listed in the IHM Summer 2006 newsletter, which can be downloaded from <http://www.pcusa.org/health/international/pub.htm>.

A sampling of the grants made:

Democratic Republic of Congo

-Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa: \$6,450, Orphans and Widows project

Ethiopia

-East Gambella Bethel Synod: \$12,000, Vulnerable Children project

India

-Christian Medical Association of India: \$25,000, health-care leadership development

-American Leprosy Mission: \$13,000

Thailand

-Church of Christ in Thailand: \$14,950, AIDS Ministry

Other international medical projects receive assistance from Presbyterian Women's Thank Offering and from the Medical Benevolence Foundation. Among the PW grants are projects addressing HIV/AIDS in China, Egypt, and South Africa.

## **COLOMBIA CHURCH LEADERS SEEK SAFETY IN THE UNITED STATES**

*Rev. Milton Mejía hopes to do seminary study before returning*

Immediately after the 150-year anniversary celebration of the Presbyterian Church of Colombia (PCC) in August, Rev. Milton Mejía and his wife, Rev. Adelaida Jiménez, left Colombia for the United States. Milton had received threats again against his life and that of Mauricio Alvarez, who has worked with the church giving legal aid to displaced persons who have fled the violence in their home areas. Milton and his family are now in Texas studying English and hope to enter one of our Presbyterian theological seminaries

next year to obtain advanced degrees in theology before returning to Colombia. We are grateful to Tres Rios Presbytery and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, plus other presbyteries and individuals, for taking them in and underwriting their support this fall. There is a good possibility that they will receive scholarships for their seminary studies, but help is needed to support the family during this time. The PCUSA has set up an ECO account, E864500, which can be used by all who are willing to help in this project for Milton and Adelaida and for strengthening of the Presbyterian Church of Colombia.-  
Alice Winters, Colombia

Read more about the PCC's anniversary celebration in an article by Alexa Smith in the Fall issue of Highlights. Read Alice Winter's November letter at [http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/wintersa/wintersa\\_0611.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/wintersa/wintersa_0611.htm).

### AND MORE . . .

\* **JANUARY 7-DAY OF PRAYER FOR THOSE PERSECUTED AND MARTYRED FOR THEIR FAITH.** The 2007 Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study provides a "Minute for Mission" for use on this Sunday. In many parts of the world being identified as a Christian can bring scorn and ridicule-or worse. Many can face imprisonment and even death. On this day Presbyterians are asked to pray for Christians who experience religious persecution and martyrdom, and also for all people of faith who suffer for their beliefs.

\* ***ECU-DIALOGUE TO BE AVAILABLE ONLY BY E-MAIL.*** Beginning in January 2007 the newsletter Ecu-Dialogue will no longer be available in print form, but will become an e-mail publication. To sign up to receive the e-newsletter, go to [www.pcusa.org/interfaith/connect.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/interfaith/connect.htm) or e-mail Susan Abraham at [sabraham@ctr.pcusa.org](mailto:sabraham@ctr.pcusa.org).

\* **ISRAEL/PALESTINE SABEEL CONFERENCE.** More than 300 people (including 109 from North America) participated in Sabeel's Sixth International Conference in early November. The theme was "The Forgotten Faithful: A Window into the Life and Witness of Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land." The conference began in Jerusalem and moved to Bethlehem and other locations, including Christian villages in Upper Galilee. Read the Presbyterian News Service release about the conference at <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2006/06613.htm>. More information is available on the Sabeel Web site, <http://www.sabeel.org/>.

\* **INTERFAITH LISTENING PROGRAM DVD AND VIDEO.** PCUSA Media Services has created an 8 1/2-minute DVD that tells the story of the Interfaith Listening Program in brief. The resource also includes a 21-minute section of an earlier video on Interfaith Listening, a study guide, and a variety of resources that may help with interfaith involvements. Cost: \$5.00. Item # 7429205001. Order from <http://www.pcusa.org/listeningproject/#newdvd>.

\* Good news from the International Monetary Fund: **NEARLY 100 PERCENT OF MALAWI'S INTERNATIONAL DEBT HAS BEEN CANCELLED**: 3.1 billion dollars! Hopefully these funds, which will now remain in the country, will be used for development-for education, food security, irrigation, medical care, and industry. May the Lord give knowledge and integrity to Malawi's leaders for the wise use of these resources!-Debby Chase, Malawi,  
[http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/chased/chased\\_0611.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/chased/chased_0611.htm).

\* The **Fall/Winter issue of *HIGHLIGHTS***, a twice-yearly print publication about the PCUSA's worldwide ministries, goes into the mail this month. To subscribe go to <http://www.pcusa.org/wmd/list.htm> or call (888) 728-7228, ext. 5158.