

PCUSA WORLDWIDE E-NEWSLETTER

June 15, 2007: Transformed Life in Korea

IN THIS ISSUE

- **ABUSED KOREAN MOTHER RECEIVES A "FAMILY MONTH AWARD"**

Mission worker helps woman find new life through a Presbyterian shelter

- **FILIPINO CHRISTIANS SHARE CONCERNS WITH GA MODERATOR**

Many church workers and activists have been killed in recent years

- **AFRICAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN TO DISCUSS COMMON CONCERNS**

First conference of its kind will involve women from 30 PCUSA partner churches

- **RECYCLING LIVES IN INDIA**

Joining Hands initiative empowers Dalit women

- **SQUAWKING HENS ANNOUNCE THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

David Wiseman writes from Guatemala

- **AND MORE . . .**

June 18 Early Bird registration date for World Mission 07 Conference, NCC women's delegation visits Middle East, Ecumenical and Interfaith Network, new book: *The End of Poverty*

ABUSED MOTHER RECEIVES A "FAMILY MONTH AWARD"

Mission worker helps woman find new life through a Presbyterian shelter

Sook Hee Bae writes from South Korea: "May is the 'Month of the Family' in Korea. This year the city of Seoul organized a big event on May 11 for all the shelters for domestic violence survivors and for government-supported low-income families. They selected mothers from these shelters who have adjusted to their environment well and called them role models. Won Hee Kim (not her real name), who came to our shelter, was one of those selected to receive this award.

"Won Hee knocked on the door of our shelter in January with two children, a 4-year-old daughter and a 2-year-old son. She had been abused by her husband physically, emotionally and mentally. She was very frightened and had no desire to live. Through counseling and warm care from our staff she started to open up. She has been attending early morning worship services every day. Before she had never had a chance to attend church, had never seen a Bible, and didn't know Christian life. Finally she accepted Jesus Christ as her Savior, was baptized, and became a born-again Christian.

"Won Hee is learning new job skills through a vocational program and is looking forward to a new job that will raise the quality of life of herself and her children. She has become a new person. She has a positive mental outlook and is trying to achieve new goals."

Read Sook Hee Bae's full letter at
www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/baes/baes_0705.htm

FILIPINO CHRISTIANS SHARE CONCERNS WITH GA MODERATOR

Many church workers and activists have been killed in recent years

As the Rev. Joan S. Gray looked on, Erlinda Manano—speaking in slow, broken English, tears trickling down her left cheek—recalled the day her eldest son, a 21-year-old Filipino activist and church worker, was brutally murdered.

Isaias Drummond Manano Jr., was gunned down April 28, 2004, by an unidentified man “in cold blood,” Erlinda Manano told Gray, moderator of the 2006 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Gray, making her first international trip since being elected last June, was visiting church partners and congregations in the Philippine capital as part of a 17-day, three-nation tour of Asia. She also visited South Korea and Japan.

Since 2001, when President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo took office with the backing of the powerful military, hundreds of activists, clergy and other church workers, unionists, farmers, human rights workers, and journalists have been slain, sparking accusations of a systematic, nationwide campaign to silence those who challenge the status quo.

Read more about Gray's visits at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07258.htm and www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07294.htm,

AFRICAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN TO DISCUSS COMMON CHALLENGES

First conference of its kind will involve women from 30 PCUSA partner churches

Christian women throughout the African continent face similar challenges. “How can we feed our children?” they ask. “How will we send them to school?” “When we hear there is no medicine for AIDS, does God hear?” “What will happen to my children when I die?” “How can we take care of all these orphans?” “Can a Christian woman question her husband when he beats her?”

In September 2007, 60 African women from across Africa—from 18 countries and more than 30 PCUSA partner churches—will come together in Nairobi, Kenya, to discuss these questions and others. The event is called Tumekutana, which is the Swahili word for “we have come together.” They will share their stories together, pray and worship together,

encourage one another, and find ways to meet their common challenges as Christian women in Africa.

Churches across the PCUSA have an opportunity to be involved in this conference through praying for and sponsoring participants. Volunteers are sought to receive e-mails about the women and the countries they represent and to set up prayer groups for the women.

Information will be posted soon at www.pcusa.org/worldwide/Africa. You may also e-mail Caryl Weinberg at cweinberg@firstpresevanston.org or Lacey Gilliam at lgilliam@ctr.pcusa.org.

RECYCLING LIVES IN INDIA

Joining Hands initiative empowers Dalit women

All of her life Rukumni has known she is considered to be disposable in Indian society. A mother of two daughters, she was abandoned by her husband. As a Dalit she is treated as an outcast, as untouchable. In India's caste system, Dalits aren't even a part of the strict Hindu social ladder. She is triply oppressed. She is poor, female and Dalit. And therefore disposable. Rukumni's only employable skill is that of a farm laborer and those jobs are in short supply since big agribusinesses are putting small farmers out of production.

Desperate to earn money to feed her family, Rukumni found her way to Chethana, a network of organizations and people's movements in southern India that is linked with the Joining Hands initiative of the PCUSA's Presbyterian Hunger Program. Chethana finds ways for India's marginalized poor to break out of centuries of poverty.

One of those ways is economic development for Dalit women: Small collectives of women are organizing to create alternate ways to support themselves and their children. One such program is to collect garbage and recycle the biodegradable items for alternative uses.

Read more at <http://www.pcusa.org/joininghands/stories/rukumni.htm> or download this story as a Minute for Mission bulletin insert from <http://www.pcusa.org/witness/minutearchive.htm>

SQUAWKING HENS ANNOUNCE THE KINGDOM OF GOD

David Wiseman writes from Guatemala:

A mission delegation from a PCUSA church in Austin, Texas, recently assisted 25 indigenous women in launching a simple chicken project in order to supplement their meager incomes. Working shoulder to shoulder, they constructed chicken coops, adopting the "design-as-you-go" method.

The high and holy moment came when we heard the sound of cackles in the distance and the 250 pollos were delivered to the village. As the boxes of chickens were scootched across the floor, ready for distribution, Pastor Kathy, her first time praying in the presence of such a fowl congregation, offered a petition in words something like this: "O Lord, like a mother hen you gather us in and shelter us under your wings. Watch over these women as they begin their work and as they seek to support their families." Each woman, equipped with a large, round basket and a smile of gratitude, received her 10 chickens and proudly carried them home balanced on her head.

The sky didn't open up that day. There was no descending dove as at the baptism of Jesus and no voice of God thundering forth. Nor were there choirs of angels to herald the moment. Simply the flurry of descending chicken feathers and a multitude of squawking hens, announcing that the Kingdom of God is at hand, in the midst of the ordinary and the everyday.

Read David's full letter at

www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/wisemand/wisemand_0706.htm

AND MORE . . .

- **A MULTITUDE OF WORKSHOPS.** In addition to keynote speakers, Bible studies, opportunities to mingle with other Presbyterians "passionate for mission," the **WORLD MISSION '07** Oct. 2–6 conference offers a variety of workshops for learning and inspiration. The list is available at www.pcusa.org/missioncelebration/workshops.htm. **EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION for World Mission '07 ENDS JUNE 18.**
- **NCC WOMEN'S DELEGATION VISITS MIDDLE EAST.** The plight of women and children suffering through hostilities in the Middle East was the focus of a delegation of women church leaders from several denominations of the National Council of the Churches of Christ (NCC) visiting Israel/Palestine and Jordan in May. Reflections on the trip are available on the NCC's Web page www.nccusa.org/NCCdelegation.html
- The Presbyterian **ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH NETWORK**—<http://www.eif-pcusa.org/>—provides a Web site with a wealth of information and links to news and events related to interfaith issues.
- We could banish extreme poverty in our generation, says Jeffrey Sachs in a bold new book, and yet 8 million people die each year because they are too poor to survive. An excerpt from the book **THE END OF POVERTY** is available from the Presbyterian Hunger Program's Web site, <http://www.pcusa.org/hunger/>