

May 15, 2007

## **Hope in Lebanon**

### **IN THIS ISSUE**

- **HOPE IN A BIBLICAL CITY IN LEBANON**

*A Presbyterian church becomes a haven*

- **AN EXPERIENCE OF LOVE IN CAMBODIA**

*Paul Friesen, regional liaison for Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, writes*

- **WIDE-OPEN DOORS IN NIGER**

*A new opportunity for Christian outreach through education*

- **HUNTER FARRELL ARTICLE FEATURED IN CHRISTIANITY TODAY**

*Incoming World Mission director describes efforts to stop deadly pollutants in Peru*

- **PERSONAL PEACE-BUILDING IN CHINA**

*Mission teachers fill a modest but important role*

- **AS EASY AS 1-2-3**

*A Tennessee church finds a creative way to support international mission*

- **MISSION WORKER PHOTOS, VIDEOS AVAILABLE ON THE WEB**

*You can see as well as read about their work*

- **AND MORE . . .**

Interfaith Listening Teams, Iraq Mission Network, orphans in Africa, UBL celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, prayer requests

### **HOPE IN A BIBLICAL CITY IN LEBANON**

*A Presbyterian church becomes a haven*

Two Palestinian refugee camps were established in Tyre, the southernmost city of Lebanon, in 1948. One had 3,000 refugees and the other 1,600. Nowadays the number in both approaches 100,000 people. People in these camps live way below the line of poverty, health conditions are drastic, and malnutrition is common.

About five years ago a young pastor, George Ghanem, and his wife, Monitta, felt called to proclaim God's love to this historical city that was visited by Jesus. Along with Zizi, a convert from one of the revival campaigns in Beirut several years ago, they had a dream for the Presbyterian Church in Tyre to be a place where all the outcasts in the camps could find comfort, food, clothes, medicine, encouragement, hope, and above all, the Good News.

Believers in sister churches started giving the church some of their unwanted stuff or money to buy medicine and powdered milk for the babies and children. Soon the church became a haven for the poor, outcasts, marginalized, and refugees. Now several meetings are also held inside the camps—prayers, Bible studies, and visitations.

Read more about the "people who are making the church one of the most beautiful manifestations of koinonia" in a letter from Nuhad Tomeh at [www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/tomehn/tomehn\\_0704.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/tomehn/tomehn_0704.htm)

### **AN EXPERIENCE OF LOVE IN CAMBODIA**

*Paul Friesen, regional liaison for Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, writes:*

The Khmer Presbyterian Fellowship (KPF) in Cambodia is a group of about five churches led by a couple who live in Phnom Penh. Two or three times a year I visit them and travel out to the rural areas to meet with newly emerging groups of Christians. Although life seems to be improving, the struggle to survive is readily apparent almost everywhere.

In February Brian, a graduate student from the Philippines studying in Malaysia, and I met with a group of about 20 leaders, male and female, young and old. As we shared from the Bible and worshiped God through singing, it became apparent that the people carried deep pain and hurt from their past. This hindered them in their walk with God and in their ability to minister. Sitting in a circle, each one was asked to share how they felt and what problems they were experiencing. Brian asked them if they felt like God didn't love or care for them. They all replied "yes." So we invited them to pray for a revelation of God's love, and when they responded to the invitation to receive the Father's love, the presence of the Spirit came. Our interpreter began to weep and shake all over. Later the leaders shared what they had experienced. One of them saw a vision of the Father reaching His arms to His children.

Read more of Paul's spring letter at [http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/friesenp/friesenp\\_0704.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/friesenp/friesenp_0704.htm)

### **WIDE-OPEN DOORS IN NIGER**

*A new opportunity for Christian outreach through education*

The state of Niger is removing itself from the operational oversight of schools. This change has resulted in a significant opportunity for organizations such as the church to become involved in the education of Nigerians. Islam (with assistance from the Arab world) is making great strides in the field, and therefore the pressure is on for the church. (Christians make up one-half of 1 percent of the population) to also develop schools.)

Harouna Labo, the president of the PCUSA's partner church in Niger, the Eglise Evangelique de Republique du Niger (EERN), says the EERN seeks to be involved in the

development of Niger's educational system. Labo says the doors are wide open for this evangelistically educational type endeavor. Read more in the March letter from Glen and Carol Hallead at [www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/halleadg/halleadg\\_0703.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/halleadg/halleadg_0703.htm) (Glen is regional liaison for West Africa.)

### **HUNTER FARRELL ARTICLE FEATURED IN *CHRISTIANITY TODAY***

*Incoming World Mission director describes efforts to stop deadly pollutants in Peru*

"Something's very wrong here," said Esther Hinostrza. "It's the children." This is how the article "Cleaning Up La Oroya," in the April 2007 issue of *Christianity Today*, begins. Hunter Farrell, PCUSA mission worker (and soon to be director of the World Mission program area) writes about how Hinostrza, a women's leader in the evangelical church of Peru, with the help of the Joining Hands Network of Peru ([www.pcusa.org/joininghands/peru.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/joininghands/peru.htm)) and others, including a pharmacist in Columbus, Ohio, and a Catholic archbishop, are making a difference in the lives of children in the city of La Oroya.

La Oroya is home to a large antiquated metal ore smelter that emits more than 1,000 tons of toxic emissions each day. The factory was polluting the town, causing the children of La Oroya to become seriously ill. Often they could not play outdoors because of the smelter's emissions.

"What started as one woman's cry for help," writes Farrell, "mushroomed into a global mission effort across denominational lines and national borders. . . .

"Dietrich Bonhoeffer asked, 'Will the church merely gather up those whom the wheel has crushed, or will it prevent the wheel from crushing them?' Hinostrza . . . together with hundreds of Christians in Peru and the United States are learning the answer to that timely question."

Read the full article at [www.christianitytoday.com:80/ct/2007/april/37.70.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com:80/ct/2007/april/37.70.html)

### **PERSONAL PEACE-BUILDING IN CHINA**

*Mission teachers fill a modest but important role*

One aspect of Presbyterian peace-building in China is placing Presbyterian personnel in this country, giving more Chinese a chance to base their perceptions on actual Americans rather than on characters from Hollywood films or images from news broadcasts. The number of Chinese who will have direct contact with a Presbyterian in China is limited, but most of the personnel the PCUSA places in China are teachers in teacher-training colleges. They not only have direct and sustained contact with literally thousands of students but also have indirect impact on the students their students will eventually teach.

The role one denomination can play in a relationship between two large and powerful nations is modest, but the PCUSA's long history and strong network of relationships gives Presbyterians the opportunity to make a contribution exceeding our demographic size. To the extent that we can help Chinese people build fair and accurate perceptions of Americans, and Americans of Chinese, we increase the chances that these two world powers will try to work with each other to deal with whatever problems we face.—Don and Wei Hong Snow, China [www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/profiles/snowd.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/profiles/snowd.htm)

The PCUSA recruits English teachers for the Amity Teachers Program in China. For more information contact Mission Service Recruitment at (888) 728-7228, ext. 2530, or visit [www.pcusa.org/msr/coworker.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/msr/coworker.htm)

### **AS EASY AS 1-2-3**

*A Tennessee church finds a creative way to support international mission*

First Presbyterian Church of Columbia, Tenn., believes financial support of international mission personnel can be as easy as 1-2-3. The church is challenging each member, on the FIRST Sunday of every month, to give TWO dollars per month for a year to support the THIRD century of mission by U.S. Presbyterians.

The idea for the offering has its roots in an address PCUSA staff member Bruce Whearty gave at a Middle Tennessee Presbytery gathering. He pointed out that a one-time contribution of \$2 from all 2.3 million Presbyterians would more than solve the denomination's projected \$4 million funding shortfall for mission personnel during the next two-year budget cycle.

The church's Mission Committee and session enthusiastically supported the creative proposal, and the congregation collected \$570 during its first offering on May 6.

Read the full story at [www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07278.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07278.htm)

### **MISSION WORKER PHOTOS, VIDEOS AVAILABLE ON THE WEB**

*You can see as well as read about their work*

Many mission workers send photographs to the Mission Connections office so they can share images of the people and places that are special to them. With proper credit and accurate captions, the photographs may be used on church Web pages. Besides those incorporated into the mission workers' letters, albums of photos are available at <http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/photos/photos.htm>

The following 10 mission workers have also created short videos about their work that can be viewed on the Web. Go to [www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/profiles/name-search.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/profiles/name-search.htm), then click on individual names in the alphabetical list to go to their Web pages:

Mark Adams, U.S.–Mexico border  
Phyllis Byrd, Kenya  
Ellen Dozier, Guatemala  
Sue Makin, Malawi  
Les and Cindy Morgan (a 14-minute video not directly viewable but available on a free DVD)  
Walt and Valerie Shepard, Congo  
Larry and Inge Sthreshley, Congo

**AND MORE . . .**

- **INTERFAITH LISTENING TEAMS.** The PCUSA's Office of Interfaith Relations office will again bring two Christian-Muslim teams to the United States for visits with local communities this fall. The teams will spend 3–5 days in select presbyteries from September 14 to October 8, 2007. To learn more about the program or to apply to host a team (the deadline for applications is June 15) visit <http://www.pcusa.org/listeningproject/>
- **IRAQ MISSION NETWORK.** The first meeting of the Iraq Mission Network will be held in Louisville, June 18–20. Those who are involved in a leadership capacity in issues related to Iraq, or want to be, and want to extend this role in their church community, are encouraged to attend. For more information contact Mark McCabe at [mmccabe@ctr.pcusa.org](mailto:mmccabe@ctr.pcusa.org)
- **MISSION CELEBRATION.** Registration is available online for World Mission '07: A Celebration of Grace, an October conference in Louisville. Visit [www.pcusa.org/missioncelebration](http://www.pcusa.org/missioncelebration)
- **MISSION CHALLENGE '07.** The count is now up to **134 PRESBYTERIES** and **45 MISSION WORKERS** who will participate. For more information visit [www.pcusa.org/missionchallenge07](http://www.pcusa.org/missionchallenge07)
- **BY THE YEAR 2010 ONE-THIRD OF AFRICA'S CHILDREN WILL BE ORPHANED.** One of the tragic consequences of the HIV/AIDS crisis is the growing number of orphaned and vulnerable children. Deaths from AIDS contribute to the estimated 16 million African children under age 15 who live without mother or both parents. Churches are at the heart of each community and it is there that the challenge must be met. To contribute to ECO #051674, "AIDS Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Africa," visit [www.pcusa.org/give/online/projectSelectAction.do?numberString=E051674](http://www.pcusa.org/give/online/projectSelectAction.do?numberString=E051674)
- In April the **LATIN AMERICAN BIBLICAL UNIVERSITY** (UBL) in San Jose, Costa Rica, celebrated its **10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**. Begun in 1923 as a women's Bible school, today it is a well-respected institution of theological training, its program carried

out in 19 centers in 14 countries. The students do much of the course work in their home countries through programs of theological education by extension (TEE).

- **ENGAGEMENT!** Mark Hare, mission worker in Haiti, has announced his engagement to Jenny Bent, from the Moravian Church in Managua, Nicaragua (wedding date to be set: probably between March and May 2008).

- **PRAYER REQUESTS.** (1) Pray for Cindy Easterday and her family. Cindy's mother died April 29, four days after Cindy arrived home from Lesotho. (2) Gordon and Dorothy Gartrell in Brazil write: "Recife is becoming more violent daily. Assaults happen regularly in our neighborhood. Please pray for the safety of our family and our neighborhood and that our work won't be hindered by the violence." Read the Gartrells' April letter at [www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/gartrellg/gartrellg\\_0704.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/gartrellg/gartrellg_0704.htm)