

PCUSA WORLDWIDE: Crisis in the South Pacific

PCUSA WORLDWIDE is a monthly e-mail newsletter about the international mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). You are invited to share this newsletter with others interested in the world mission of the church such as newsletter editors, mission committees and Christian educators. Free subscriptions are available at <http://www.pcusa.org/worldwide/list.htm>

November 14, 2007

IN THIS ISSUE:

• **GLOBAL WARMING THREATENS PACIFIC COUNTRIES, CHURCHES**

Changing climatological conditions are creating havoc, David Walter reports

• **A "LIGHT ON A HILL" IN INDIA**

Scott Smith, a PCUSA "empowerment consultant" in India, explains

• **TUMEKUTANA: A HISTORIC GATHERING**

African women's leaders conference is the first of its kind

• **AIDS MINISTRY IN MADAGASCAR**

A PCUSA partner church is in the forefront

• **MISSION WORKER JOHN MCCALL FEATURED BY THE AP**

Wire service produces photo/audio collage of Presbyterian ministry in Taiwan

• **AND MORE . . .**

Mission Challenge '07 update, missiologist Ralph Winter on Western mission mistakes, Linda Valentine visits Asia, Web site for giving, new *Africa's Children* resource, Advent Calendar, mission worker selected for interfaith program

GLOBAL WARMING THREATENS PACIFIC COUNTRIES, CHURCHES

Changing climatological conditions are creating havoc, David Walter reports

David Walter, regional liaison for the Pacific, recently attended the General Assembly of the Pacific Conference of Churches in Pago Pago, American Samoa. One of the most important items on the agenda was global warming and what its effects are on island countries in the Pacific.

"A combination of factors is creating havoc," Walter says. "These factors include rising sea levels, increasingly strong cyclones, greater storm surges, and extremely high spring tides called 'king tides.' Since none of these countries have any land to spare, any land lost to the sea is critical. Some of the lower coral atolls have already disappeared beneath the waves.

"With limited fresh water supplies to begin with, these effects are also poisoning the wells that exist. Farmland that was once viable has now been ruined by salt water. Homes that were once on the shore have been flooded by the ocean.

"The Conference has asked for our prayers. We also need to hold our government's feet to the fire and insist that regulations and laws that begin to reduce our carbon footprint are passed into law and then enforced."

Read David's October letter at

http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/walterd/walterd_0710.htm

A "LIGHT ON A HILL" IN INDIA

Scott Smith, a PCUSA "empowerment consultant" in India, explains:

On the edge of one of the worst slums in the town of Dehradun, in northern India, is a Christian ministry called "SNEHA," which is Hindi for God's love or grace. It really is a "light on a hill."

SNEHA was started over 10 years ago by Dr. Reeta Rao and her husband as a medical service to the people of the slums. It has branched out to include literacy and skills-training, candle-making, sewing, and *mehendi* (putting special designs on the hands and faces of the bride and other women in wedding parties). The project helps the women of the slums generate their own incomes and savings, which result in increased social respect. SNEHA also started a school that many children from the slums attend. It is a good ministry and has been a valuable Christian presence over the years.

Read about how SNEHA is facing challenges in Scott's letter at

http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/smiths/smiths_0709.htm

TUMEKUTANA: A HISTORIC GATHERING

African women's leaders conference is the first of its kind

Fifty-three women from 16 African countries and 17 from the United States came together at the Tumekutana conference in Kenya in September. They worshiped, prayed, cried and reflected together; they were challenged and blessed. The women left feeling encouraged and inspired to act alone and together for change in their lives as well as in the lives of their families, churches, and countries.

The speakers did not "pity" these women in their tremendously difficult situations, but rather challenged them to live as Christ called each of them to do.

Many of the women never travel beyond their region, so to come together and know each other as women of faith who face the same challenges proved to be a blessing in itself.

The women said many times that they had no idea there were "people out there who cared enough for them to bless them with this conference." They were overwhelmed by that sense of blessing and grace. Read the full report by former PCUSA mission worker Caryl Weinberg at <http://www.pcusa.org/worldwide/tumekutana/update.htm>

AIDS MINISTRY IN MADAGASCAR

A PCUSA partner church is in the forefront

Elizabeth Turk writes: The FJKM [Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar] continues to be in the forefront in the fight against HIV/AIDS. PCUSA's partnership has enabled three FJKM dispensaries to continue a vital ministry to those living with HIV when other funding ceased.

Another exciting AIDS ministry is the Peer Educator Program, which trains youth from FJKM schools and youth groups to share with their peers about the dangers of HIV/AIDS and how to withstand negative peer pressure. It is exciting to hear their stories.

Thanks to the PCUSA, FJKM's National AIDS Committee was able to send representatives to FJKM branches' national meetings. They had about two hours to share about the church's role in the fight against AIDS and challenge members in each branch to see how they can best fight AIDS by promoting abstinence among youth, stronger marriages, and better parenting and care for those with HIV.

Read Elizabeth's September letter at http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/turkd/turkd_0709b.htm

Editor's note: December 1 is World AIDS Day. For resources, visit <http://www.pcusa.org/aids-international/>

MISSION WORKER JOHN MCCALL FEATURED BY THE AP

Wire service produces photo/audio collage of ministry in Taiwan

Christianity has flourished among Taiwan's aboriginal peoples, but many young aborigines are leaving the faith as they migrate to the cities. John McCall, a PCUSA mission worker since 1996, is working with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan to help reverse the trend. See an Associated Press audio/video report at http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/files/specials/interactives/_international/taiwan_holyhills/index.html?SITE=AP

Read more about John's ministry and his letters at <http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/profiles/mccallj.htm>

AND MORE . . .

- **MISSION CHALLENGE '07 UPDATE.** Mission Challenge '07 sent 48 PCUSA missionaries criss-crossing the country in October. They visited 144 presbyteries and 700 congregations. speaking at presbytery meetings, preaching at Sunday morning worship services, dialoguing with mission committees, and sharing table fellowship at countless potluck dinners. They spoke to more than 26,000 people during the monthlong emphasis in groups ranging in number from 1 to 460.

<http://www.pcusa.org/missionchallenge07/index.htm>

- **MISSIONOLOGIST RALPH WINTER** has urged Asian mission leaders to avoid Western mission mistakes. Among the mistakes he outlines are starting Bible schools rather than universities, and congregations bypassing mission agencies when sending church members as missionaries. "It may be true that some mission agencies are more experienced and wiser than others, but to my knowledge there is no example of a local congregation bypassing mission agencies with any great success," he said.

Winter maintains investing in long-term missionaries is more useful than sending short-termers. The full story, from the United Kingdom's *Christian Today*, can be read online at <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/12.mistakes.western.mission.agencies.have.made/14414.htm>

- **GAC DIRECTOR LINDA VALENTINE VISITS THAILAND, CHINA AND KOREA** and sees certain themes emerging in these countries: Each has had history in the 20th century that challenged the very existence of the church and has shaped its vitality and local leadership today. Leadership development is high on the priorities of the churches. Presbyterians have been founders and supporters of many of the leading educational and health institutions. Again and again there are requests for greater partnership. Read Linda's blog about her trip at

<http://www.presbyterian.typepad.com/lindavalentine/>

- **WEB SITE FACILITATES MISSION GIVING.** There is a new, easy way to support PCUSA mission workers. You can make a difference with just \$1 a day! So proclaims a new PCUSA Web site to encourage the support of missionaries. Visit

<http://www.pcusa.org/mission/>

- **2008 MISSION YEARBOOK FOR PRAYER & STUDY.** The *Mission Yearbook*, an annual resource of information and inspiration, is now available. Order item #1571530835 online at <http://www.pcusa.org/marketplace/item.list.jsp> or call (800) 524-2612. The cost, \$9.25 each or \$8.00 each for 10–24 copies, plus shipping.

- *Presbyterians Today's* 2007 **ADVENT CALENDAR**, "Spreading the light of Christ," includes a number of international mission stories. To order online, visit

<http://www.pcusa.org/today/advent.htm>

• **NEW RESOURCE** for Presbyterians concerned about **VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN AFRICA**. Produced by the PCUSA Relief and Development, World Mission, and Peace and Justice program areas, Africa's Children: A Church Response to Children's Issues in Sub-Saharan Africa is available at no cost. PDS tem #25384-07-003. Order online at <http://www.pcusa.org/marketplace/item.search.item.jsp> or download it from <http://www.pcusa.org/aids-international/resources.htm#Download>

• **FARSIJANA RISAKOTTA-ADENEY**, PCUSA mission worker in Indonesia, has been invited to be the representative of Indonesia for the Fulbright Interfaith Community Action Program. The committee selected 10 scholars from different countries who are working for inter-religious peace. Farsijana says she was surprised they chose a Christian to represent the largest Muslim country in the world. Since September 17, through November, she is a visiting scholar at Barnard College, Columbia University, in New York City. Read more about Farsijana's interfaith experiences in her September letter at http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/adeneyb/adeneyb_0709.htm

• The World Mission program area is seeking a **COORDINATOR FOR INTERNATIONAL EVANGELISM AND FRONTIER AREAS**. The coordinator will serve as the primary liaison with ecumenical and international partner church programs of frontier mission and evangelism and with PCUSA mission personnel serving in frontier mission areas of the world. Candidates must have five years experience working in programs of evangelism and experience living and working internationally. See a full job description at <http://onedoor.pcusa.org>