

May 15, 2008 **Growing mission**

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>. Submit story ideas to patrick.cole@pcusa.org.

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MORE MISSION PERSONNEL PROPOSED

GAC-approved budget increase will go to General Assembly

For the first time in 50 years, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is poised to increase its corps of international mission workers.

The proposed 2009–2010 General Assembly Mission Budget approved by the General Assembly Council (GAC) in April and going on to the General Assembly this summer includes funds to increase the number of mission workers from the current 196 to 215 in 2009 and to 220 in 2010.

Last fall's Mission Challenge generated a net of \$500,000 for international mission. Building on that response, some \$2 million in Extra Commitment Opportunity (ECO) gifts for world mission are anticipated each of the next two years.

Read the Presbyterian News Service release at <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08322.htm>

To contribute, visit www.pcusa.org/mission

PDA RESPONDS TO MYANMAR, CHINA DISASTERS

OGHS funds assist survivors

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has committed \$100,000 from One Great Hour of Sharing and designated funds to provide emergency assistance to survivors of the devastating tropical cyclone Nargis that hit Myanmar the first weekend in May. News reports predict the number of deaths could total as many as 80,000. U.N. officials report that close to 1 million people are homeless. The low-lying Irrawaddy Delta region, the country's main agricultural area, suffered the most severe damage. PDA's funds will support humanitarian relief items for disaster survivors. The response is focused on food first, from \$40,000 to \$50,000 in food aid-then shelter.

PDA is working as a member of ecumenical partnerships Action by Churches Together (ACT) and Church World Service (CWS). In addition to immediate relief operations a comprehensive assessment is ongoing. Gifts for this disaster relief can be designated to DR000145—Myanmar/Burma.

PDA is also responding to the earthquake that struck China May 12. The PCUSA's mission partner in China, the Amity Foundation, is responding to the disaster; Amity staff members have been assessing the damage in Chengdu and other affected areas.

Funds from One Great Hour of Sharing and designated giving will be used to help Amity purchase rice, quilts and shelter material for the earthquake survivors. Amity has already provided approximately \$143,000 for the purchase and provision of drinking water and food. PDA has established a special account to receive contributions for China earthquake relief: DR000138—Disaster Relief—China.

For more information visit PDA's Web site <http://www.pcusa.org/pda/>

CRISIS IN LEBANON

Theological school president requests prayer for the country

On May 12 Mary Mikhael, president of the Near East School of Theology (NEST) wrote to supporters about the unrest in Lebanon. Her letter in part says: Fighting on the streets

of Beirut ceased, the last two days, although fighting resumed in the mountains. However, the situation in Beirut remains very tense; stores remain closed, business offices are opening for a few hours only, universities and schools remain shut, the port and the airport are not functioning, and some major roads are blocked. A civil disobedience is being declared by the opposition until the government cancels the decisions it made on May 5.

We are very sad for those who were killed and those who were wounded, and those who lost property-all seeming to be in vain. And all of us seem to be of short memory that violence will benefit no one.

Dear friends, thank you all for your prayers. Thank you for sending words of encouragement and solidarity. Please keep praying for Lebanon and for NEST and for all the educational institutions as we approach final exams and commencements and summer seminars.

Read the complete letter at s at <http://pcusa.org/worldwide/lebanon/letter-mary-mikhael.htm>

JOINING HANDS NETWORK CAMPAIGNS FOR DISABLED CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

TFD coalition lobbies for amendments in Egyptian law

Together for Family Development (TFD), the Egypt Joining Hands network, has been campaigning to change Egyptian law so that it clearly states that children with a disability have a right to public education.

The amendment TFD has proposed is among a broad range of amendments to the Egyptian Child Law of 1996 that would strengthen the rights of children. Since January TFD has been lobbying Parliament to pass the entire package of amendments, which have now been submitted to Parliament. They include raising from 7 to 12 the age of criminal responsibility for street children, raising the minimum age of marriage for both males and females to 18 years, making pre-marriage medical checkups mandatory, harsher penalties for perpetrators of violence against children, especially if the victims are in their care, and completely outlawing female genital mutilation.

Earlier this month the amendments came before the Shura Council. Members of Shura reviewed them one by one (there are over 100 articles) and made minor changes. When the amendments are introduced into the People's Assembly, considerable discussion is anticipated, although not about the one for inclusive education. Supporters are cautiously optimistic that there will be a positive outcome.

Read more in Nancy Collins' March letter at http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/collinsn/collinsn_0803

Linda Valentine's March 4 blog, <http://www.presbyterian.typepad.com/lindavalentine> and the Joining Hands March newsletter, <http://www.relufa.org/partners/jhnewsletter/egypt.htm>

TRANSFORMATION AT THE BORDER

"These folks turned to Jesus Christ and were changed"

For the fourth year in a row during Holy Week a mission team from a church in Texas came to work with their partner church in the state of Coahuila, Mexico. Each day, after activities with the local church members doing church construction and vacation Bible school, different families would host all of us for the evening meal. After dinner, as we sat around the table, our hosts told their stories of the transformations that they had experienced in their lives since they began following Jesus Christ. Some spoke of prior problems with alcohol and drugs, family neglect, separation from their spouse, problems with violence or, in one case, of being jailed in the United States for having entered the country illegally.

During these times of crisis and hardship, these folks turned to Jesus Christ and were changed. We heard stories of spouses returning to one another, fathers turning away from alcohol and drugs, and children being brought into the church and reminded by their parents of the life the family had left behind. They give full credit to God and freely tell others in their community of the transformations they have experienced.

One husband painted his favorite Scripture on the front of the family's home and placed another verse across the top of the windshield of his pickup. Another family puts Christian tracts by their front door and gives them to visitors. One father, who played music only in nightclubs, is now forming a praise band. In one household a 3-year-old loves to lead the family during devotionals. She stands on a chair and orders family members to sing or pray at the appropriate times. There is joy and dependence on God that is evident in these homes. Their neighbors know they have become "Cristianos."- Chris McReynolds on the U.S.-Mexico border

Read Chris' April letter at

http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/mcreynoldsc/mcreynoldsc_0804.htm

ORPHANS RECEIVE HOPE FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Presbyterian gifts make a difference

Imagine yourself as an orphan child. One or both of your parents have died, and you are so poor that you have only the one set of torn clothing that you are wearing. On school days you watch other children, knowing that you will never have the opportunity they have.

Imagine yourself as a young teenage girl. You are raped and get pregnant. Your family disowns you. You have no skills and are very alone. What hope have you?

Maybe you were more fortunate, and had two parents who could afford to pay your fees to primary and secondary schools. However, now your parents can no longer afford to educate you, as they are pressed to provide even the primary education for your eight brothers and sisters. There are no jobs available.

These are the realities of the lives of so many of God's children in Congo, but, for some, they now have opportunities, thanks the giving of American Presbyterians.

Over the last five years several hundred orphans have been given a chance and a hope for a brighter future. Currently local orphans are attending 13 different primary, secondary, and trade schools in our village of Tshikaji and in the nearby city of Kananga, thanks to Presbyterian gifts that have paid their school fees. (\$50 dollars a year pays for uniforms, books, tuition fees, food, and lodging.)-Mike and Nancy Haninger, Congo

Read the Haningers' letter at

http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/haninger/haninger_0804.htm

AND BRIEFLY . . .

- The PCUSA is seeking three more delegates to attend the **INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE** in the **CZECH REPUBLIC** from July 23 to August 4, 2008. Youth should be between 17 to 24 years of age. The conference is sponsored by the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren and HEKS, a Protestant relief organization. E-mail cobe@comcast.net for further information or an application form or call (410) 647-7494.

- **APPLY NOW TO HOST A CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM TEAM FROM PAKISTAN.** This year the Interfaith Listening Program will bring a Christian and a Muslim from Pakistan to the United States for visits in churches, colleges and communities around the United States from September 26 to October 20. The team members will be the Dr. Maqsood Kamil, executive secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan, and Khuram Dastgir Khan, member of Pakistan's National Parliament from the Muslim League Party. Presbytery groups interested in hosting the team should apply by June 15, 2008. For more information visit <http://www.pcusa.org/interfaith>

- **LA OROYA ON CNN.** CNN is running a video clip about La Oroya, Peru, featuring the work of the Joining Hands Against Poverty Network in Peru, which is linked with the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy in St. Louis, Mo. The CNN delegation to Peru was accompanied by PCUSA mission worker Jacob Goad. The clip can be viewed at <http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/health/2008/04/28/gupta.polluted.city.cnn?iref=videosearch>, and after the elections the full piece will be aired on CNN's Planet in Peril Series. Read PNS' story at <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08359.htm>

- The **YOUNG ADULT VOLUNTEERS** program has a new Web site for people interested in learning more about this one-year mission opportunity. Their job descriptions vary, but YAVs (young adults 19 to 30 years of age) serve in 18 sites in the United States and abroad. Not just a fun year away from home or school, YAVs experience living in an intentional Christian community, focus on spiritual formation, engage in the church's mission in communities of need, and develop leadership within communities of faith. For more information visit the YAV Web site:

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

- Three new Web country pages have recently been added to the World Mission's "Presbyterians at work around the world" site-for **ARMENIA, FRANCE** and **SPAIN**. Visit <http://www.pcusa.org/worldwide>

- **CLIFTON KIRKPATRICK**, currently completing his service as stated clerk of the General Assembly, has been appointed Visiting Professor of Ecumenical Studies and Global Ministries at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He will teach up to two courses a year in such areas as the ecumenical church, Presbyterian studies, and the global church. He will also continue to serve as president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Read more at <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08180.htm>

- **JOANN GRIFFITH**, a retired PCUSA mission co-worker who served for about 40 years in Ethiopia as a teacher at Bethel Evangelical Secondary School (BESS), will receive an honorary doctorate degree from Erskine College in Due West, S.C., on May 17.

- **PRAYER REQUEST from Korea.** The use of farmland, grains, and vegetable oil to make bio-fuel and the rising demand from the world's rapidly growing middle classes has caused a 40 to 150 percent increase in the world price of soybeans and wheat flour-which are what Lighthouse Foundation purchases to provide soy milk and bread for the needy in North Korea. Floods in 2008 make this problem more serious. Pray that our ministry can continue to feed up to 20,000 children and disabled persons.-Art and Sue Kinsler, Korea

- **CAT LOVERS** will enjoy reading Joyce Michael's April letter from the Czech Republic about gray "Stín" (Shadow) and the image she has become for her: http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/michaelj/michaelj_0804.htm

- **PAST ISSUES** of the PCUSA WORLDWIDE newsletter are available in PDF format from <http://www.pcusa.org/worldwide/newsletter.htm>