

July 21, 2008 **Equipping for 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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WORLD MISSION ADDS STAFF TO HELP PRESBYTERIANS ENGAGE IN MISSION

Equipping people for direct involvement is a new focus of Presbyterian World Mission

Presbyterian World Mission has named two new staff members whose primary duties are to help grassroots Presbyterians engage directly in international mission.

Lis Valle, a curricula designer and educator from Puerto Rico, will be associate director for Equipping the Church for Mission Involvement (EMI), a new work area created with World Mission's reorganization earlier this year. In addition to resource development and training, the work area she will lead includes offices devoted to interfaith relations and young adult and national volunteers. From 2004 to 2007 she was a stewardship educator for the Synod of Puerto Rico. Currently she is a curricula designer with the Computer Learning Center in San Juan and is president of Ministerio Enseñandoles, an organization that develops Christian education materials for children and middle school youth.

Prior to her work with the synod, Valle was employed as an immigration attorney. She is now pursuing M.Div. studies, which she hopes to continue at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. She will join World Mission in August.

Ellen Sherby, a PCUSA mission co-worker in Nicaragua since 2000, will be the training specialist for EMI. She will arrange and conduct training opportunities and develop materials to help Presbyterians in their mission involvement.

Sherby has been serving with CEPAD (Nicaraguan Council of Evangelical Churches). She is involved in education work that links churches in the United States and Nicaragua. She will begin her new duties in December. Read her July letter to her friends and supporters at http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/sherbye/sherbye_0807.htm

"Both of these individuals bring considerable experience, commitment and gifts to the important task of equipping Presbyterians for mission involvement," says Hunter Farrell, director of World Mission. "They will work closely with other World Mission offices and PCUSA mission initiators to develop and implement training modules and materials that highlight Presbyterian values and that provide groups and individuals with best practices for direct mission engagement."

EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO CONTINUE MISSION

Sue Makin praises the work of younger colleague in NY Times blog

In the blog of *New York Times* columnist Nicholas D. Kristof, Sue Makin writes that "a wonderful part of my job is training younger clinicians who will carry on the work after I have left." Sue, a PCUSA physician serving in Malawi, tells how the competence and quick judgment of one of those younger colleagues, clinical officer Sam Matandala, saved the life of a mother experiencing an obstetrical emergency. She also emphasizes that the "second class" status of women in Malawi contributes to an extremely high maternal mortality rate in that country.

"Sam had to act quickly to save the woman's life. (Calling for me to come from home would have wasted precious time.) He and the nurse midwife started IVs in both arms and drew blood for type and crossmatching. They looked for her relatives in the hope that someone among them would donate blood, but they had run off after dumping her at the hospital, perhaps thinking that she was already dead.

"Luckily, the lab technician, called from home, found a unit of compatible blood in the blood bank, and a transfusion was started for the woman. The ultrasound by Sam showed that the woman had a partial miscarriage and needed to have all of the products of conception removed from the uterus to stop the bleeding. Due to the woman's poor condition, going to the operating theater and doing the evacuation of the uterus under full anesthesia was out of the question. So Sam did it right there in the maternity ward under Pethidine, an analgesic like Demerol, and followed up with Pitocin, for her uterus to contract and the bleeding to stop. The next morning, only some nine hours later, the woman was walking around and even asking to go home."

Read Sue's full blog at

<http://kristof.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/07/15/maternal-health-in-malawi/>

G.A. AFFIRMS "INVITATION TO PARTNERSHIP," PEACEMAKING

Assembly renews a call to reconciliation in the Middle East

Commissioners to the 2008 General Assembly in June unanimously affirmed by a hand vote "An Invitation to Expanding Partnership in God's Mission," the statement resulting from the Dallas conference in January that calls for increased partnership and coordination among various Presbyterian groups involved in international mission. Endorse the invitation at www.pcusa.org/calltomission.

The Assembly also passed a budget that will for the first time in 50 years increase the number of PCUSA mission co-workers. The denomination is seeking to grow the number of mission workers to 210 in 2009 and 215 in 2010. Currently there are fewer than 200 under appointment.

In other actions this Assembly "stayed the course" of being peacemakers around the world. It called for "responsibly" bringing the troops home from Iraq and passed overtures that affirmed immediate food aid to North Korea, support of human rights in Zimbabwe, the Philippines, North Korea and Colombia, and a careful approach to peacemaking in Israel and Palestine.

Nancy Kahaian, moderator of the G.A. Committee on Peace and International Issues, which brought these recommendations to the Assembly, said: "(Our) committee considered what it means for us to be Christian people who are instruments of God's mercy and grace in a broken and fractured world."

The G.A.'s action affirms the prophetic role of the church in speaking truth to governments, creating resources and supporting the Amman Call. The Amman Call affirms a "two-state" solution in Israel and Palestine, a shared Jerusalem, the human rights of refugees and occupied peoples, a call to resist extremism and push for reconciliation. The Amman Call was created at a World Council of Churches conference in 2007.

Read the G.A. peacemaking news release by Shane Whisler at <http://www.pcusa.org/ga218/news/ga08141.htm> and other G.A. reports at <http://www.pcusa.org/ga218/news.htm>

A SIGNIFICANT GATHERING IN GUATEMALA

Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Catholics discuss common concerns

In May we had a conference in Antigua, Guatemala, that included representatives of 22 church-related development agencies from Europe, the United States, Canada, and 23 churches, parachurch agencies and civil society groups from throughout Central America. This is the first time that international church agencies have sat down to discuss development issues with representatives of Roman Catholic and Evangelical churches, including Pentecostals, and with representatives of Mayan spirituality.

In our part of the world most Protestants don't consider Roman Catholics to be Christians, many Catholics dismiss Protestants as "separated siblings," and both suspect that Mayan spirituality might be in league with the Devil.

The second day of the conference we received a visit by Msr. Álvaro Ramazzini, Roman Catholic bishop of San Marcos, one of Guatemala's most populous and impoverished departments. For 40 minutes he shared with evangelistic passion his gospel vision of service to the poor in the name of Jesus. Something is wrong, he said, in a country where 95 percent of the population confess faith in Jesus Christ but we are still shackled by violence, corruption, racism, chronic hunger and extreme poverty.

In recent months Msr. Ramazzini has been receiving death threats. At the end of his testimony we formed a circle around him and expressed our solidarity with him by laying our hands on his shoulders and praying for him, led by Verónica Pérez, a Pentecostal minister.—Dennis Smith, Guatemala

Read more of Dennis' letter at http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/smithd/smithd_0806.htm

A LESS-THAN-STRAIGHTFORWARD PEACE PROCESS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

But along the way vital lessons are being learned

Doug Baker writes an engaging, funny, and serious tale of a difficult journey home from a meeting— "I did get home eventually, a bit hungry, plenty tired, and more than a bit annoyed . . ." Read his full letter at http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/bakerd/bakerd_0806b.htm. In sum, he offers this reflection:

The late afternoon and evening had been a living metaphor for the less-than-straightforward peace process here. Although most players have relegated violence for political purposes to the past, small groups of dissidents are still planting the occasional bomb and generating hoaxes in an attempt to disrupt or derail the process.

The grand designs of political agreements meant to transport us to our destination inevitably turn out to be less perfect vehicles than we had anticipated. A lot of time and energy is spent going down roads that don't seem to get us any further. The sectarianism we hoped we had left far behind in terms of hatred, mistrust, intolerance keeps reappearing, and at successive crossroads it keeps being revealed as still very much near at hand. Some of those at the wheel lack the expertise, wisdom, and common sense navigating the way forward requires. And the expected "arrival" time keeps getting delayed a bit longer.

The positive that came out time and again on that messy journey from Dublin to Belfast was how fellow travelers supported each other. The peace process in Northern Ireland is still a long way away from the destination, but more and more people are learning vital lessons about what it means to be fellow travelers. May God grant them faith needed to stay the journey, hope to weather delays, compassion to attend to one another's needs in the process, and wisdom to move forward toward the destination.

AFRICA CONSULTATION CALLS FOR STAND AGAINST WORLD DISORDER

WARC church leaders urge study of justice issues

A wealthy minority is working to dispossess the poor, creating food and fuel price increases as well as chaos and corruption— so said a group of 25 Reformed theologians and church leaders from Africa at a consultation in June.

The consultation in Pretoria, South Africa, was sponsored by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and its African regional body, the Alliance of Reformed Churches in Africa (ARCA), to continue to plan strategically how to engage African churches on the Accra Confession. The Accra Confession, the major statement of WARC's 24th General Council held in Accra, Ghana, in 2004, states that working to create a more just economy is essential to the integrity of the Christian faith.

"We looked through the eyes of the powerless and suffering people and reflected on what this means for us. We located ourselves among the poor and downtrodden and this determined our theological viewpoints and our faith and humanity as we read the Bible together.

"We stand against this world disorder, rightly identified by the Accra Confession," the African church leaders stated in a communiqué. The Accra Confession states: "We believe the integrity of our faith is at stake if we remain silent or refuse to act in the face of the current system of neoliberal economic globalization."

A keynote address at the consultation was given by Allan Boesak, a former WARC president, who reminded the group that the church must be on the side of the poor because that is where God is.

Read more: <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08458.htm>

AND BRIEFLY . . .

- "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me . . ." is the theme of the 2008 **NEW WILMINGTON MISSION CONFERENCE** (NWMC), an annual gathering being held this week, July 19–26, at Westminster College in Pennsylvania. NWMC offers programs for all ages, but with a focus on youth ages 12–25.

About 1,000 participants are expected, and visitors are welcome. Read more:

<http://nwmcmmission.org/content/2008NWMC.aspx>

- **MISSION NETWORKS** meeting in September: South Africa/Lesotho, Sept. 17–18, Philadelphia, Pa.; Cuba, Sept. 22–25. For more information contact the appropriate area offices. (See <http://www.pcusa.org/worldwide>.)

- **GOOD NEWS FROM EGYPT.** Nancy Collins reports: The Child Law amendments have been approved by the People's Assembly. The amendment proposed by the Together for Family Development (TFD) network stating children with disability have the right to inclusive education passed without modification as did the majority of the amendments which strengthen child rights in Egypt. Amendments related to female circumcision, child abuse, and marriage age were modified and weakened. While we wish all the amendments were approved as submitted, we are very excited about our amazing success with this first TFD advocacy effort.

- **PARTNERS FOR JUST TRADE** (PJT), a non-profit Christian organization related to the PCUSA that cultivates global partnerships between impoverished artisans and conscientious consumers, has developed a new six-part **BIBLE STUDY RESOURCE**. *Fair Trade: Using Our Purchasing Power for Justice and Hope*, a 40-page booklet, was written by Judy Hoffhine, a PJT board member and associate pastor for global ministries at Broad Street Presbyterian Church in Columbus, Ohio, and Ruth Farrell, acting coordinator of the Presbyterian Hunger Program. Cost: \$5. For more information and to order visit <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08467.htm>

- **APMP CONFERENCE.** The Association of Presbyterian Mission Pastors will hold its 2008 annual conference December 2–4 in Louisville, Ky. Theme: "The Fullness of Time for the Muslim World." Plenary speaker: J. Dudley Woodberry, professor of Islamic Studies at Fuller Seminary. Early-bird registration (\$150) is available until October 25. Visit <http://www.missionpastor.org/index.htm>

- Tom Arthur, PCUSA pastor of City United Reformed Church in Cardiff, Wales, is in his last year before retirement—BUT in the weeks since Easter he has been "up to his ears" launching a **NEW CHRISTIAN BOOKSTORE**. The shop, to be called Churches Together Bookshop, Tom says, might actually become the retail outlet for Anglican church publications in Wales. Read his account of learning new skills and preparing to open this month at http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/arthur/arthur_0806.htm

- **The NEAR EAST SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY** (NEST) in Beirut, Lebanon, has celebrated 75 years of service. It is now teaching Christian leaders from Armenia, Germany, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Palestine, South Korea, Sudan, Syria, and the United States. Visit the school's Web site at <http://www.theonest.edu.lb/>

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