

**PCUSA WORLDWIDE** newsletter  
**Global mission continues**

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**GENERAL ASSEMBLY COUNCIL'S NEW STRUCTURE, BUDGET CUTS AFFECT WMD**

*Global mission continues, with challenges and changes*

Continuity in our international mission work was carefully safeguarded in the changes announced May 1 in connection with a new two-year budget and restructuring. The changes, approved by the General Assembly Council in late April, do affect the work of Worldwide Ministries in significant ways. The changes were made more urgent and difficult by an approximately \$9 million shortfall anticipated in the GAC's 2007 budget. Cuts affected a variety of programs across the GAC.

The sending of people to serve in mission will continue, and the staff support stays strong. The budget reduced international mission positions by 55, but at least 40 of these will be vacated by natural attrition. WMD is working hard to make sure that no mission personnel leave service due to financial reasons alone. No decisions have been made about which positions would be cut should that become necessary. On the contrary, GAC staff and elected leadership are putting our minds to the launching of a special appeal to shore up the funding so that no further loss of persons will be necessary.

GAC restructuring relates to the fact that the staffing structure no longer needs to depend upon three ministries divisions to implement the Council's Mission Work Plan that revolves around four goal areas - Evangelism and Witness, Justice and Compassion, Spirituality and Discipleship, and Leadership and Vocation. With the end of divisions this October some WMD staff positions will end, including the director's. Replacing the three current division directors (Worldwide, National, Congregational) will be one position, a

GAC deputy executive director for witness. The support to mission networks, already numbering 26, will now shift to be the responsibility of the offices of the area (regional) coordinators.

The Ecumenical and Mission Partnership Team, which nurtured the formation of most of the mission networks, has been eliminated, because the area offices can work directly with mission personnel to support these networks. Other mission involvement program responsibilities will be handled by a new Direct Mission Involvement Office, which will coordinate our growing international Young Adult Volunteer Program, the Mission to the U.S.A. program (in which international partners come and serve briefly in our presbyteries), and the LINKS program (in which our staff works with outside organizations to provide meaningful short-term volunteer mission experiences that are connected to our larger mission effort).

The other principal change to note is that work with educational institutions will also shift to area coordinators, and the international leadership development scholarships will be devolved to partner institutions; the Global Education and International Leadership Development office has been eliminated. Meanwhile, programs of hunger, self-development, health and disaster assistance will continue their ministries of justice and compassion. The International Evangelism Office will continue helping birth indigenous churches through frontier mission efforts and supporting partner churches' evangelism ministries through grants.

Read more about the GAC action and how it affects WMD at <http://www.pcusa.org/wmd/>.

## **PEACEMAKING EDUCATIONAL EVENT IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE**

*Presbyterian group hears both Israeli and Palestinian speakers*

After three years of careful planning, the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, working with the Office of the Middle East and the International Center in Bethlehem, held a travel/study conference in Israel and Palestine April 25–May 5. The purpose of the event, designed for teams of individuals from presbyteries, was to give participants an opportunity to visit the region and meet sisters and brothers in Christ, listen to both Israeli and Palestinian speakers explain the current situations, and envision and plan potential ministries they can implement after their return to the States. Teams of three to seven people represented 27 presbyteries.

Updates from the event are posted at <http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/tripreport.htm>.

## **MISSION WORKERS WRITE FROM AFRICA**

*Rich worship in Cameroon, God's light shining in Sudan, AIDS success in Malawi*

• **Rich worship in Cameroon.** Christians in the Presbyterian Church of Cameroon are not only hospitable but are also deeply religious. Church services can last more than two hours! There is plenty of time to praise the Lord. Music is one of their finest expressions of praise. It is not uncommon to hear five or six different choirs sing in a single service. The songs range from traditional Western hymns to lively African choruses sung in English or one of the many dialects native to Cameroon. I am surprised by how liturgical the services are. Christians used to more informal styles of worship would be surprised to hear the traditional call and response, "The Lord be with you. And also with you." Or, during preparation for the Lord's Supper, "Lord, I am not worthy to receive you but only say the word and I shall be healed." The combination of formal liturgy and lively African choruses makes for a very rich worship experience.—*Shirley Hill, Cameroon*

Shirley Hill was appointed to service in Cameroon just this year as a consultant for the church on issues relating to HIV/AIDS. Read her first letter from the field at [http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/hills/hills\\_0604.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/hills/hills_0604.htm).

• **God's light shining in Sudan.** There have been areas where God's light has recently shone through. The Selama church building, which the group from Shenango Presbytery had come to help build, was being finished; Sudan Evangelical Presbyterian Church (SPEC) was celebrating Easter in the prisons with an open service for all to attend; the Presbyterian Church of Sudan took a major step and ordained two women as pastors. One was a student of Betsy's and a graduate from Nile Theological College.

In the Nuba Mountains, the SPEC's Komo Bible School Training Institute was opened, and 15 people were in the first class. These 15, using their own resources, have built their own rooms and planted mango and guava trees to help support the school.—Barry Almy and Betsy McCormick, PCUSA workers in Ethiopia

Barry Almy is mission enabler for Sudan and Ethiopia and Betsy McCormick is a professor of theological studies at Nile Theological College in Khartoum, Sudan. Read their April letter at [http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/almyb/almyb\\_0604.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/almyb/almyb_0604.htm).

• **AIDS success in Malawi.** Adoption is not an option in this land of many orphans. Since AIDS overwhelmed this society, most households seem to be caring for "extra" children. The Crisis Nursery is presently searching for homes for more than 40 abandoned children, and there are not yet laws to permit overseas adoption.

[But] amidst recent stresses there have been successes. Our AIDS clinic was assessed as having the highest standard of care in the country, and our pharmacy was judged as the best unit in the Christian Hospitals Association of Malawi.—Martha Sommers, PCUSA worker in Embangweni, Malawi

Martha Sommers is a medical officer at Embangweni Hospital. Read her April letter at [http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/sommersm/sommersm\\_0604.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/sommersm/sommersm_0604.htm).

## **UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL**

*Real live missionaries are available to inform and inspire*

Back in the United States after a time of service overseas, a host of PCUSA missionaries are available to speak in local churches and presbyteries—and they have amazing stories to tell. Would you like to hear about a peacemaking conference between 25 Muslim kings and 25 Christian kings? They were brought together to talk to each other for the first time by Presbyterian mission workers in Indonesia.

Would you like to hear about Milon's new sewing machine? He was an orphan, dying of tuberculosis, when he was treated, healed, encouraged, and enrolled in a training program for tailors. He has now graduated and has his own sewing machine. His doctors and mentors were Presbyterian mission co-workers in Bangladesh.

Do you want to hear firsthand what it's like to plant trees in Madagascar, teach in China, or evangelize in Brazil? And what it's like to learn to live in another culture?

Some of the mission speakers available are home on furlough ("interpretation assignment"). Others have recently retired or ended their service. Some have served whole careers overseas. Others have been Young Adult Volunteers for a single year.

A list of available PCUSA mission speakers, and contact information, can be found at [www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/speakers/speakers.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/speakers/speakers.htm). If you invite a speaker who is currently under appointment, you are not expected to pay a fee or give an honorarium, but to provide transportation and hospitality. For assistance call the Mission Connections Office in Louisville at 1-888-728-7228, ext. 5826.—*Bruce Whearty, former missionary to Vanuatu*

## **THE CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA REQUESTS PRAYER**

*Anti-conversion bill passed in fifth state assembly*

The Church of North India is disheartened by the recent passing of an Anti-Conversion Bill in the Legislative Assembly of Rajasthan. India's Constitution gives each state the right to pass its own bills and laws, and Rajasthan is the fifth state to pass this bill.

The bill has the following effects:

1. The government can put any Christian leader in jail if someone complains that s/he is engaged in conversions.
2. The punishment is between two to five years of rigorous imprisonment.
3. This is a non-bailable offense.

4. The government has sealed many Christian orphanages, leprosy homes, hospitals, colleges and schools and put them under their direct supervision.

**AND MORE . . .**

• **Interfaith Listening Teams.** WMD's Interfaith Relations will bring two Christian-Muslim teams to the United States for visits with local communities, October 28–November 12, 2006. To learn more about this year's teams and to apply to host a team, visit <http://www.pcusa.org/listeningproject/about.htm>.

• **Readers' Service,** located at Stony Point Center, Stony Point, N.Y., collects and distributes books, cassettes, and other materials to churches, schools, hospitals, libraries, and mission stations around the world. In many cases Readers' Service is the only source of affordable materials for these institutions. You can help Readers' Service by donating books or by making a monetary contribution. For more information visit <http://www.pcusa.org/globaled/readers.htm>.

• The **2006 Geneva Seminar for Clergy and Laity** will take place Sept. 7–Oct. 5. Engaging clergy and laity in dialogue with leaders of the World Council of Churches, the seminar will focus on how churches work ecumenically to respond to concerns of the world. The cost of the seminar is \$1,200, not including airfare. Contact [sabraham@ctr.ppcusa.org](mailto:sabraham@ctr.ppcusa.org).