

November 2008 issue: **Peacemaking in Sudan**

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### **FORMER ENEMIES IN SOUTHERN SUDAN RENOUNCE VIOLENCE**

*Once warring tribes committed to living together peacefully*

Ingrid Reneau writes from Sudan: Rev. John Okumu was returning from Pibor and surrounding Murle areas, where he'd gone to "seal" the peace initiative between the Murle and the Dinka Bor. He recounted a story about these "hostile" Murle: After having their cattle raided by one group of Nuer, while another Nuer group from the same area was buying cattle in another village, the Murle escorted the group buying cattle safely to the same village from which the raiders had come.

The Nuer were surprised the Murle did not kill them in revenge for the raiding; instead, the Murle told them, "No, we will take you and the cattle you bought from us back to your village; then we will come and fight all of you together!"

After the Murle safely returned the Nuer with the cows they'd purchased, these Nuer chastised the ones who had done the raid, saying, "We could have been killed because of what you did! But look at the Murle! They did not kill us! They only fight because of what we do to them. See, they returned us home, with the cattle we bought, but now they will come and fight us here. We need

to give them back the cows we've raided." And this is exactly what happened: more than half the cattle the Nuer had raided from the Murle were returned to them!

Okumu said the Dinka Bor were shocked and pleased to see how open the Murle leaders were to worship with them, their archenemy! In obedience to the Word of God that they have already in their lives, the Murle are changing and are willing to enter into their enemy's territory to "seal" their commitment to living peaceably with them. Okumu said other tribes note that when the Murle make a peace agreement, they are never the ones to break it!

Read Ingrid's letter at [http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/reneaui/reneaui\\_0810.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/reneaui/reneaui_0810.htm)

*Editor's Note:* The PC(USA) and its Sudanese partners have been heavily involved in peacemaking in southern Sudan. In 2003, Haruun Ruun, then a PC(USA) mission worker, won the prestigious Spirit of Raoul Wallenberg Humanitarian Award for his peacemaking efforts in southern Sudan. Haruun was named a special advisor to the president of Sudan in 2005.

### **CONNECTING CONGREGATIONS' PASSION WITH LONG-TERM MISSION**

*Executive presbyter says that mission networks are the key to sustainable practices*

The mission network movement is an effort to connect all the enthusiasm and passion for mission, which is expressed in congregations doing mission trips, with the Presbyterian Church's historic commitment to deep, long-term, sustainable mission work with Christian partners around the world. Mission networks connect the long-term, mature, sustainable model of mission that grounds the work of our professional mission co-workers with the short-term, local, enthusiasm of mission trips. Most important, the mission networks may be the best connection between our congregations and the World Mission offices. There is a new spirit of collaboration, partnership and mutually blowing through our General Assembly, and particularly embodied in the new team, under the leadership of Hunter Farrell, now assembled to lead the World Mission offices. This spirit is very evident in the growth and support given to our mission networks. We have received and we stand in a glorious heritage of Presbyterian world mission. Get involved! Support World Mission! —Mark England-Krieger, executive presbyter of Carlisle Presbytery

Read Mark's full blog at

<http://markekrieger.blogspot.com/search?q=Mission+Network+movement>

Learn more about mission networks at <http://www.pcusa.org/worldwide/get-involved/networks.htm>

### **STORM DAMAGE IN CUBA IS "NOTHING SHORT OF CATASTROPHIC"**

*Caribbean countries are also challenged by "unrelenting violence"*

The Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba is located in the central part of the island, where damage from Hurricanes Gustav and Ike was relatively light. On the surface life seems fairly normal. Around the edges, however, there is a great deal of fear and trepidation about the months ahead. Both current crops and stored food supplies were heavily damaged. Food shortages were already evident. In the small town of Los Palos, there were no eggs to be found. In Havana, many of the farmers' markets were closed. Shortly after Ike the price of gas was raised in one fell swoop to almost double the previous price. An initial report on the storms' impact concluded: "The sum total of the damages caused by these storms to the Cuban economy, infrastructure, and agriculture is nothing short of catastrophic."

As Presbyterians in the United States, we have a special role to play vis-à-vis the challenges facing Cuba. We have had Presbyterian brothers and sisters there since 1890. At least 30 PC(USA) groups traveled to Cuba during 2008.

Praying and working for peace is a high priority for Caribbean churches, whose countries are experiencing an "unrelenting increase" in violence, especially among young people. An open letter from church leaders laments the significant impact of violence "on business, investment, tourism, mental health, family life, life at our schools, productivity and overall morale." The letter calls for renewed witness to the Prince of Peace in order to "encourage our citizens to believe peace is possible again." — Tricia Lloyd-Sidle, regional liaison for the Caribbean

Read more: [http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/lloydsidlep/lloydsidlep\\_0810.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/lloydsidlep/lloydsidlep_0810.htm)

### **EXCITING NEWS FOR YODOGAWA CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL**

*Institution founded by Presbyterian mission personnel to be rebuilt, expanded*

A bit of exciting news: the announcement of the rebuilding of the Yodogawa Christian Hospital (YCH), where [PC(USA) mission worker] Tim Boyle is a board member. The city of Osaka recognizes the importance of the hospital, and in order to keep it from moving elsewhere, they have agreed to sell YCH a prime piece of land at a bargain price. It is really the only adequate land available in the area and will be ideal for the rebuilding of the hospital. The plot is 1.7 times the present total area YCH now has (which is divided up into several lots separated by other buildings). And being in one large plot right next to a train station, the new location will allow YCH to develop a state-of-the-art facility that will not only be more efficient to operate but will also allow YCH to expand its services.

The present operation can continue unobstructed during the construction period. Construction can begin this year, and completion is expected within four years. The cost will be huge, but the finances are in place, and the outlook for loan repayment within a reasonable time frame looks promising.

We are imagining the improvements we would like to see, such as a larger chapel. The present one is often jammed with 200 people, many of them standing in the back during the 15-minute morning chapels. Tim has spoken there several times and is scheduled again in November. We'd like to see the new hospital have space for at least 400 seats. — Juji Boyle, Japan

Read Juji's letter at [http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/boylet/boylet\\_0810.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/boylet/boylet_0810.htm)

### **RELIGIOUS LEADERS REVIEW GOALS FOR REDUCING POVERTY**

*UN report says rising oil and food prices jeopardize gains of recent years*

Seventy-five Jewish, Islamic and mainline, Pentecostal and evangelical Christian religious leaders met in New York in September to review the 2008 report from the United Nations on progress toward reaching its Millennium Development Goals (MDG) for greatly reducing extreme poverty worldwide by 2015.

The group—which included Sara Lisherness, PC(USA) director of Compassion, Peace and Justice; Ruth Farrell, director of the Presbyterian Hunger Program; and Joel Hanisek, director of

the PC(USA)'s U.N. Office—reviewed the report and consulted and prayed about the role of religious communities in responding to the continuing global hunger and poverty crises.

The MDG report states that the strong and sustained progress in reducing extreme poverty is now being undercut by higher prices, particularly food and oil, and a global economic slowdown. The report was written before the Wall Street meltdown of recent weeks.

"We have the resources. . . . We can end poverty. Do we have the will to re-order our values to do so?" Farrell said in an interview with the Presbyterian News Service.

Updated estimates by the World Bank are that the number of poor people in the world fell from 1.9 billion in 1981 to 1.4 billion in 2005. However, higher food prices threaten to push an estimated 100 million people back into poverty. This is particularly true for countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, currently the regions with the highest numbers of people living in extreme poverty.

The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization reports that in 2007 the number of people suffering from hunger increased by 75 million people. It estimates that 923 million people are chronically hungry.

Read more: <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08701.htm>, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>  
Learn more about the Hunger Program's monthly fast, a response to the global food crisis, at <http://www.pcusa.org/foodcrisis/>

#### **AND BRIEFLY . . .**

- **January MISSION NETWORK meeting:**  
Kenya Mission Network, January 22–24, Laguna Hills, Calif.  
For more information see the Kenya country page at <http://www.pcusa.org/worldwide/>
- **VIOLENCE IN EASTERN CONGO.** An offensive by the rebel Laurent Nkunda's National Congress for the Defense of People, or CNDP, has dramatically worsened the crisis in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, according to the PC(USA)'s Washington Office. The Washington Office has issued an "action alert" for peace in that country. Members of the Congo Mission Network have been involved in advocacy activities. Read the action alert at <http://capwiz.com/pcusa/issues/alert/?alertid=12166601&type=CO>
- **PRAYER REQUEST.** Colombian pastor William Reyes Piedrahita, 41 years old, "disappeared," taken by unknown persons on September 25 while traveling on the road from Valledupar to Maicao in the Atlantic coast region of Colombia. More than a month later there was still no information about him.
- The **2009 MISSION YEARBOOK for Prayer & Study** and the *2009 Children's Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study* are now available. They include mission stories and information on nearly 100 countries where PC(USA) personnel serve. Full-color sections highlight the work of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and the 500th birthday celebration of John Calvin. Price: \$9.25. Order from PDS at (800) 524-2612; item number 9781571530875.
- **RWANDA** Presbyterian theologian André Karamaga has been elected general secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), to be inaugurated at the AACC's general assembly

in Maputo, Mozambique Dec. 7–12. He has previously served on the AACC staff (1990–1995) and has been the president of the Council of Protestant Churches in Rwanda and vice-president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Read more:

<http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08748.htm>

- The situation in **BURMA** has not improved. People in the mountainous areas are attacked and displaced by the dictators' army, while those affected by the May 2 cyclone have been denied aid by the dictators. In the face of this, with your help and prayers, we have been able to bring help, hope, and love to people under oppression." — Amy Davisson, PC(USA) missionary based in northern Thailand, who coordinates a refugee ministry among Burmese. Read more:

[http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/davissona/davissona\\_0809.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/davissona/davissona_0809.htm)

- The church in Lodz, **POLAND**, is in its turn nurturing a new church start in Wroclaw, where about 12 people gather once a month to worship in a small, rented chapel. A young professional organist fills the space with glorious music. A stunning soprano showers down sound from the rear balcony. Most of these 12 worshipers travel over an hour to this central point. —Liz and Doug Searles, Lodz, Poland. Read more:

[http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/searlesd/searlesd\\_0810.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/searlesd/searlesd_0810.htm)

- This year the Presbyterian Church of **VANUATU** will take on the responsibility of three new secondary schools. Studies in Vanuatu have found that schools that are run by the Presbyterian Church produce a better quality of education and more well-rounded students. David Walter, PC(USA) regional liaison, writes: "These schools educate heads, hearts, minds, and hands in ways that secular schools cannot. The church there needs our support for this daunting task when they have so few resources."

[http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/walterd/walterd\\_0808.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/walterd/walterd_0808.htm)

- **QUOTE OF THE MONTH.** "Mission is about striving with sisters and brothers near and far to discern what God is calling us to be and to do as we journey toward the future that God has for all of us." — Karla Koll, Guatemala

[http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/kollk/kollk\\_0809.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/kollk/kollk_0809.htm)

- **PAST ISSUES** of the PCUSA WORLDWIDE newsletter are available in PDF format from

<http://www.pcusa.org/worldwide/newsletter.htm>