

PCUSA Worldwide: Short-term volunteer opportunities

PCUSA WORLDWIDE newsletter
Short-term Volunteer Opportunities

September 12, 2006

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Short-term volunteers linked with partner mission organizations

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Presbyterians fight against the global scourge of AIDS

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Update on churches in Lebanon, Akobo Hospital reopened in Sudan, new Presbyterian Hunger Program newsletter

"LINKS" OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Short-term volunteers linked with partner mission organization

The "LINKS" program offers opportunities for those interested in short-term international volunteer service (2 weeks to 11 months) by being LINKED with mission partners. The PCUSA's current LINKS partners are the Medical Benevolence Foundation, the Amity Foundation, and the Presbyterian Border Ministry.

LINKS partners identify service opportunities around the world, provide position descriptions for these placements, and post them on the PCUSA's "One Door" Web site [http://onedoor.pcusa.org/\(2ut1dhqowwcsjweljdbiwuva\)/user/pages/index.aspx](http://onedoor.pcusa.org/(2ut1dhqowwcsjweljdbiwuva)/user/pages/index.aspx). LINKS partners interview candidates and discern placement matches. Once placed, the international volunteer is commissioned through his /her local church and is trained, supervised, and debriefed by the LINKS partner. LINKS partners also provide pastoral care to the international volunteer during his/her term of service.

LINKS volunteers have served in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, China and Mexico.

To learn more about LINKS visit <http://www.pcusa.org/partnerships/getinvolved.htm> (scroll to the bottom of the page). To ask about current international short-term volunteer service opportunities visit contact Shannon Langley at SLangley@ctr.pcusa.org.

OCTOBER 8 IS HIV/AIDS AWARENESS SUNDAY

Presbyterians fight against the global scourge of AIDS

Africa stands to lose an entire generation to the AIDS epidemic that is sweeping the continent. In some pockets of sub-Saharan Africa, up to 20 percent of the population is infected with the virus that causes the disease.

In the course of a one-hour worship service 200 people will die of AIDS.

To read more about the denomination's response to the AIDS crisis in Africa, "It's a Matter of Faith," and giving opportunities, visit <http://www.pcusa.org/aids-international/matter-of-faith.htm>.

A downloadable "Minute for Mission" about the spread of AIDS in Africa is available from <http://www.pcusa.org/aids-international/resources.htm>.

The commitment of the PCUSA to engage Presbyterians in global responses to diseases of poverty, which include AIDS, was affirmed at the General Assembly in June. Congregations and presbyteries are urged to give a portion of their annual Peacemaking Offering, received by most congregations on World Communion Sunday, the first Sunday in October, to support HIV/AIDS projects. The full GA action can be found at <http://72.54.6.218/Business/Business.aspx?iid=139>.

DARFUR: A CRITICAL POINT IN THOUSANDS OF LIVES

PDA urges advocacy for dire situation in Darfur

The situation in the Darfur region of Sudan has reached a critical point such that the lives of perhaps hundreds of thousands of innocent women, children and men are at immediate and severe risk. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) urges people to connect with the Sudan Action Advocacy Forum and take the recommended advocacy steps. The Web site is <http://www.sudanadvocacy.com> (click on "Action Items").

The moderators of the Sudan Action Advocacy Forum write,: "Clearly the Government of Sudan is preparing to launch a major offensive in Darfur. We believe that the intent is to permanently reduce the African Darfur population so that it never can again arise and demand fairness, justice and equality.

"We do not arrive at these conclusions lightly. But if one examines the situation from a political situation and a military strategic readiness standpoint, it appears that the Government of Sudan is ready and able to strike with overwhelming force against an enemy which has been reduced, isolated and contained. Under cover of restoring order, the Government of Sudan will launch its attack with confidence that there will be no external political or military force to stop them.

"While we would prefer to be wrong, our consultations with others whose analytical ability and assessment we respect, indicate that they have come to the same conclusions."

PDA has provided more than a quarter of a million dollars of funds to the humanitarian response in Darfur. "We do not want a repeat of Rwanda," says Susan Ryan, PDA coordinator. "We urge you to pray and act urgently." For information about PDA responses to Sudan visit <http://www.pcusa.org/pda/response/africa/sudan-index.htm>.

PCUSA INTERNATIONAL MISSION IS "EVER RENEWING"

The past two decades have witnessed creative changes

"International mission by our denomination is ever renewing," wrote Marian McClure in a guest viewpoint article in the August 14 issue of The Presbyterian Outlook "The PCUSA's national offices have encouraged creative new ways to connect people, congregations, and presbyteries more directly in responding to Christ's call to mission. I am encouraged that congregations show a growing interest in being involved.

"Creativity comes from various sources and dynamics. . . . Congregations and individuals are providing leadership. A web of relationships effected in part by the denomination's programs and mission workers led to many congregations and individuals being involved in mission in places their official presbytery partnerships were not. . . . Mission networks are thriving. They represent a large and sustained movement of congregational and middle governing body involvement in mission.

"Mission workers are being fielded in new collaborations. The process of recruiting and sending mission personnel opened up a decade ago when a San Gabriel Presbytery overture spurred changes. Presbyteries could bring a person forward, and if the purpose to be served was validated and the person passed through the screening process, the presbytery could provide up to 80 percent of the funding and the denomination would send the person in international mission. . . .

"Groups with passionate mission interests partner with the denomination. The Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship, starting especially in the early '90s, set about to restore the denomination to its roots in frontier mission, that is, sharing the gospel message in places and with peoples with little or no self-sustaining indigenous church presence. The Outreach Foundation has worked steadily to energize and fund the involvements of Presbyterians in evangelism and church growth, including important collaborations with denominational offices. In a newer initiative, the Witherspoon Society has undertaken its

first mission conference and begun cultivating alumni of our Young Adult Volunteers program for future leadership on justice issues. And the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship is leveraging important collaborations as the denomination is now fielding a co-worker couple to help with the accompaniment delegations addressing the bad human rights situation in Colombia. . . .

"Whenever Presbyterians are gathered, we find we are committed to serving Christ with 'energy, intelligence, imagination and love.' " The full article can be downloaded from http://www.pcusa.org/wmd/pdf/outlook_mcclure.pdf

STAN AND MIA TOPPLE WRITE FROM KENYA

Missionaries from Korea are spanning the globe

The Korean church has some 22,000 missionaries around the globe. Having spent the first 22 years of our mission career in Korea, it is a thrill for us to discover these messengers of the gospel in every corner.

While in Afghanistan last fall we worshiped with more than 40 Korean missionaries in the downstairs of a home in Kabul. The little congregation included a young adult group who had come to the country for a month to work in a difficult rural area of the country.

Several hundred Korean missionaries are serving in East Africa, founding and operating schools, churches and community development projects. There are two large Korean-speaking congregations in Nairobi. Our Korean prosthetist, Elder Choi, and his wife are examples of this dedication. The Chois followed the Topples to Kenya more than 10 years ago. Their financial support has come from Korean churches in the United States as well as Korea. Now near retirement age, they have their eyes on a new field of work in China.

The Koreans do it with class. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, has recently become home to the Myeung Sung Christian Medical Center. In a country with marginal medical care available even for the citizens of its capital, this two-year-old hospital with 150 beds has state-of-the-art equipment and several specialties. The director of the hospital received part of his training under Stan in our Ae Yang Won Hospital 45 years ago.

Daughter Sissel and Stan discovered in April that Mongolia, with its Tibetan Buddhism and Communist background, is a nation looking for a sure path for its future. Christianity is just getting started there and, yes, the largest numbers of messengers of the gospel are the Koreans.

The majority of these missionaries are Presbyterian-the second, third, and fourth generation fruit of missionaries who first arrived in that hermit kingdom more than 110 years ago. A significant number of PCUSA missionaries are Korean immigrants to the United States. We are blessed to be welcomed into these fellowships wherever we have

gone. The joy is comparable to parents seeing their children not only grown up but giving and sharing the values, enhanced and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Read the Topples' full letter at

http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/topples/topples_0607.htm.

JUDY CHAN WRITES FROM HONG KONG

Project brings hope to mountain children

Even though Hong Kong is a part of China, many Hong Kongers don't have much opportunity to see the poorest parts of the nation-the mountainous regions far away from glittering cities like Shanghai and Beijing.

In order to bring the reality of poverty closer to home, the Hong Kong Christian Council launched an amazing exhibition by recreating a village schoolhouse right in the middle of a busy shopping mall. A statue of a cow also from the mainland added a rural touch.

Thousands of Hong Kong shoppers who visited the exhibition were amazed at the sad reality of school facilities for many children just over the border-broken roofs, no electricity, rickety benches and tattered books. The contrast to even the lowest of Hong Kong schools was startling to local schoolchildren and their parents.

As part of the promotion, the exhibition featured our newly released book "Living in the Mountains: Voices of Joy and Sorrow from Guizhou," a collection of essays written by children living in such conditions. Among my favorite stories were:

A boy who cried as his parents sold his best friend-the old ox.

A girl who dreamed one day of seeing a car.

We believe stories like these and exhibitions like ours will continue to touch the hearts of Hong Kong people to get involved in our "Rebuilding Collapsing Schools Project." So far we have rebuilt 500 schools in the mainland and brought a much better study environment and renewed hope for many, many children in the mountains.

I pray that there will be more opportunities to improve the lives of China's children, sharing the love of Christ through our own commitment and action wherever we are.

Read Judy's August letter at

http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/chanj/chanj_0608.htm

AND MORE . . .

Update: The **CHURCHES IN LEBANON** have rallied to care for refugees and displaced people. All evangelical schools have become shelters, especially in the South

of Lebanon, hosting many Muslim Shi'ite families. A great witness. Many of the church members were also displaced, and have been sheltered in church facilities in various locations. The Near East School of Theology in Beirut became a major center for the displaced, and hundreds of Evangelical volunteers were preparing a thousand meals a day at that one single institution. It is a huge mess, but the church is there as solid and sturdy as the cedars of Lebanon.-Victor Makari, PCUSA area coordinator for the Middle East

AKOBO HOSPITAL RE-OPENS IN WAR-TORN SUDAN. Closed for almost 20 years, the former Presbyterian Hospital at Akobo has resumed its mission of health services in war-ravaged southern Sudan. Patients are being cared for at the battered facility, which is now staffed by a clinical officer and two nurses. The PCUSA International Health Ministries Office is working with the local Akobo community and other agencies to restore the hospital.

The **PRESBYTERIAN HUNGER PROGRAM (PHP)** has begun a quarterly newsletter, **PHPOST**, "a hunger justice journal," edited by staffer Leah Bomar. An article in the first issue tells about the Margaret Malloy Justice Fund, which supports Sano y Salvo, a project teaching Nicaraguan farmers how to grow and process their own organic foods. For more information or to subscribe, contact LBomar@ctr.pcsua.org.

Through its "**GLOBAL ECO-JUSTICE LISTSERVE**" PHP also offers periodic e-mail updates on water, trade and globalization issues and how they impact the world's most vulnerable people and communities. To sign up visit <http://www.pcusa.org/trade/ecojustice.htm>.

JOEL HANISEK is the new Presbyterian representative to the United Nations. The Presbyterian UN Office (<http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/un/>) advocates concerns of the PCUSA General Assemblies to the UN. Hanisek's responsibilities include helping equip Presbyterians for discipleship in the global arena through making connections with the UN community. He began his new ministry Sept. 5.