

PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY | Spring 2016

# mission CROSSROADS

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## ADDRESSING GLOBAL ISSUES

EDUCATING CHILDREN, TRAINING LEADERS,  
STOPPING SEXUAL VIOLENCE



Education empowers and transforms | 'Turn to the Living God' celebrates 25 years | Theater inspires resilience



## God connects us all

If I do say so myself, one thing we Presbyterians have always been good at is **seeing the points of connection in God's mission.**

Throughout our 178 years of mission history, Presbyterians have been boldly ecumenical, recognizing that we are but one part of Christ's body and that part of our calling is to connect well with other Christians as we work together in mission. Thus, we co-founded with our ecumenical partners "united churches" in Thailand, the Philippines and India, and ecumenical seminaries and universities in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. We know when Presbyterians collaborate in prayer and advocacy, history changes, as it did in the historic boycotts of apartheid in South Africa and against the international giant Nestle.

More than a century and a half before the "glocal" (*global + local = glocal*) concept was coined, Presbyterian Women saw the points of connection between poverty in China and the growing numbers of trafficked Chinese women around the Port of San Francisco. They set out to examine both needs—addressing the root causes of poverty in China through education, as well as supporting trafficking victims in San Francisco who found themselves a world away from home.

The Joining Hands program, which World Mission co-sponsors with the Presbyterian Hunger Program, discerned the importance of interfaith cooperation in the ministry of justice. Today Joining Hands networks are working to end hunger in eight countries. In India, Joining Hands brings together Christians, Hindus and Muslims to protect food security for thousands of farming communities forced to live in desperate poverty despite their hard work. In Peru, Joining Hands works with government agencies, human rights and environmental groups, the Catholic Church and academic institutions, all for the purpose of protecting thousands of children whose health has been compromised because a U.S.-owned metal smelter failed to adhere to environmental policies.

In all of these cases, Presbyterians understand that the Spirit brings us together with others—including persons of other faiths—to help "redraw" the world according to God's good intentions. And our global partners are particularly attuned to the natural connections between elements of mission work that even some U.S. Presbyterians wouldn't normally connect: justice, evangelism and reconciliation.

In the Philippines, our partners in the United Church of Christ run schools that educate the children of poor communities and teach them about the crafty schemes of human traffickers;

Our Guatemalan partner CEDEPCA is training leaders in indigenous communities to evangelize, sharing God's love even as they teach young girls that no one has the right to touch them inappropriately.

In Indonesia, Bernie and Farsijana Adeney-Risakotta, mission co-workers, train leaders to work at the local level for reconciliation in a primarily Muslim nation. They recently wrote:

By the grace of God we are trying to bring reconciliation, justice and peace to our Muslim neighbors. Women and children in one of the poorest villages in Indonesia are gaining hope and learning that Muslims and Christians can love and help each other.

Can you imagine if we in the PC(USA) allowed mission to bring us together with others to redraw the world according to God's good intentions?

*Mission Crossroads is a Presbyterian Mission Agency publication about God's mission around the world through the PC(USA) and our church partners.*

*Presbyterian World Mission is committed to sending mission personnel, empowering the global church, and equipping the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for mission as together we address the root causes of poverty, work for reconciliation amid cultures of violence, and share the good news of God's saving love through Jesus Christ.*

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#### On the cover:

*Classroom in a Sunni Syrian refugee camp in the Akkar area of Lebanon.*

*Photo by Scott Parker*





## Prepare to be surprised

**God's work through World Mission's three critical global initiatives will exceed our imagination**

Last summer in this space, I wrote about the “Mission Study Bible” that mission co-worker Tim Carriker had edited. This unique resource is being translated into a number of languages, and it will be read by missionaries and other Christians in many parts of the world. Tim and his wife, Marta, are retiring this year after more than three decades of mission service in Brazil. Much of Tim's career has been spent teaching mission at various Brazilian schools, and approximately 1,000 of the 6,000 Protestant missionaries sent by Brazilian groups to serve internationally have sat in his classrooms. When the Carrikers went to Brazil in 1977 as church planters, who could have predicted their appointment would evolve into opportunities to build the church in places they have never even visited?

We serve a God who works in surprising ways. As Presbyterian World Mission continues to pursue its three critical global initiatives, I believe God will work in ways far beyond our imagination.

The initiative aimed at addressing the cause of poverty by advancing education will change lives for generations to come. Parents, particularly mothers, who have received a good education are more likely to earn a decent living and be able to afford a good education for their children. God is at work through this initiative, replacing the cycle of poverty with a cycle of opportunity.

Another initiative, sharing the gospel

by training pastors for community transformation, will help make church leaders agents of transformation in both church and society. Educating more pastors to serve in places where the church is growing rapidly will help sustain this wonderful movement of the Holy Spirit. Pastors equipped with additional vocational skills will be able to supplement their modest salaries and increase the service they offer communities. For example, a pastor with expertise in agriculture can help a community increase crop yields and the community's food security. God is at work through this initiative, providing people both spiritual and physical sustenance.

The third initiative, working for reconciliation by addressing violence against women and children, addresses one of the most heartbreaking phenomena in the world today. Perhaps the most flagrant example of such violence is the scourge of human trafficking. The United Nations estimates that 21 million people are victims of coerced labor and/or forced sexual exploitation worldwide. The vast majority of those trafficked are women and children. Presbyterian World Mission is responding to our partners' pleas to join them and others in efforts to stop human trafficking. God is at work through this initiative, bringing restoration and hope to people whose dreams have been denied.

I look forward to being part of the exciting future God has for Presbyterian

World Mission. However, I will be supporting this important ministry in a different role. After prayerful discernment, I ended my full-time service with the Presbyterian Mission Agency in February, but God has placed a passion in my heart for World Mission that will never cease. I will be joining the thousands of other Presbyterians who make our church's global outreach possible by giving of their time, talents and treasure. My heart is full of gratitude for World Mission and other Presbyterian Mission Agency ministries, our global partners and our supporters. Let us pray that God will continue to open our eyes to the needs of our world and to the surprising ways God is working among us.

*Terri Bate directed the Presbyterian Mission Agency's Funds Development Ministry from November 2008 to February 2016.*

### SUPPORT GOD'S MISSION

Help address critical initiatives through mission co-worker support.

- ▶ **Poverty**  
[pcusa.org/donate/E200101](https://pcusa.org/donate/E200101)
- ▶ **Evangelism**  
[pcusa.org/donate/E200102](https://pcusa.org/donate/E200102)
- ▶ **Reconciliation**  
[pcusa.org/donate/E200103](https://pcusa.org/donate/E200103)

# Presbyterian World Mission initiatives help ease poverty in Madagascar

Kathy Melvin

With one of the highest rates of poverty in the world, mission co-workers Dan and Elizabeth Turk and Jan Heckler passionately believe Madagascar is a country with much to gain from PC(USA)'s critical global initiatives.

Madagascar's mission co-workers are among the 150 mission co-workers, 80 Young Adult Volunteers and more than 100 global partners focusing their work around three initiatives in more than 50 countries. These initiatives include addressing the root causes of poverty, seeking reconciliation in cultures of violence and engaging more deeply in the work of international evangelism.

"Working with our partner, FJKM [the Church of Jesus Christ of Madagascar], we are advocating for long-term impact in all of these areas," says Elizabeth Turk, who has served in Madagascar for nearly 20 years. "Sometimes it is difficult to quantify, but the quality of change is very apparent. The commitment of the church to follow in the footsteps of Christ gives immeasurable hope."

Dan Turk's work with seminary students weaves together the need to feed the souls and the bodies of the Malagasy people. For the past eight years, he has taught seminary students how to grow vegetables and fruit trees from grafted plants—a tool for evangelism that helps the Turks connect with the people they serve.

A source of inspiration, Dan says, is Beambiaty, a community in midwestern Madagascar where people have overcome poverty by growing tangerines. The people of Antanetibe, an hour and a



Rolland Razafarison

Tangerines from the village of Beambiaty in mid-western Madagascar are sold at a market in Antananarivo, Madagascar.

half north of the capital city, knew they had the same climate, soil and irrigation as Beambiaty, so they asked to be trained to grow tangerines. On the FJKM Development Department's reforestation day in 2011, members of the FJKM helped plant tangerine trees at Antanetibe. Now 70 families have over 20 tangerine trees each. They are also experimenting with Meyer lemons and other fruit trees.

The Turks have been inspired by following and mentoring Pastor Haja Lahadinirina. He applied to attend the Ivato Seminary but was not initially accepted. Undeterred, Pastor Haja heard the seminary had an opening for a gardener. He became the seminary's tree nursery manager and subsequently was accepted into the seminary. Now he and his wife, Iry, serve nine rural churches.

Pastors Haja and Iry are not only teaching the word of God, but also are planting trees at their churches. Pastor Haja even learned how to graft avocado trees and has taught that skill to the people he serves.

Another pastor who had been trained at the seminary in innovative techniques for growing fruits and vegetables also helped his community in a time of crisis. During a potato blight, it looked as if people in the village were facing starvation. The pastor helped the community grow a new crop: large sweet potato varieties that Dan had brought to Madagascar some years earlier. Growing sweet potatoes helped the village get through that time of hardship.

After graduating, most new pastors serve very rural communities. They are often recognized as the most educated



people in those communities. Even if some of the people served are not Christian, they look up to pastors as leaders. Pastors can help them distinguish between what is rumor and what is real. Working with the FJKM AIDS Committee, Elizabeth Turk helps train seminary students in AIDS prevention, care and counseling.

Recognizing the scope of the challenge to address global poverty, the focus of the initial campaign is on bringing quality education to one million children by the year 2020. With input from Presbyterians across the PC(USA), along with global partners, the focus on education was chosen because extensive research has shown that quality education is the best pathway out of poverty.

In Madagascar, children attend school about five years on average; the primary school dropout rate is 65 percent. Many children are forced to leave school to support their families, and the education they do receive is inconsistent. For instance, on national exams for students completing primary and secondary education, the grades required to pass can be as low as 50 percent in some subjects.

Mission co-worker Jan Heckler, who has a long and distinguished career in education, has been working with an FJKM primary school in Ambodimita, in Antananarivo, on a test project to improve the effectiveness of teachers and students through the Evidence-Based Methods of Instruction project (EBMI). In order to be evidence-based, a practice or method must have been tested and have a record of success. The students in Ambodimita were 67 children in grades 1-3. Before EBMI, the children averaged about 60 percent correct answers on their final exams. After EBMI, the children averaged an amazing 96 percent. Currently, Heckler is focused on training



Roland Razafarison

Ms. Sariaka works in the garden of the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM) Ivato Seminary in Antananarivo, Madagascar, which is supported by PC(USA).

trainers to prepare for a larger roll-out in 2016 involving hundreds of students, if funding permits.

Heckler believes the EBMI initiative interfaces with all three critical global initiatives. The education component is clear as it is generally accepted that education is a critical tool to lift people out of poverty. She says EBMI is also an important way to spread the good news of Jesus Christ—that better learners mean more comprehensive and better recall of religious curriculum.

Reconciliation is at work as well. “Most would agree that educated people are more reasoned people,” she says. “More education generally means more effective use of a wider array of skills to resolve conflict.”

The reconciliation initiative is at work in several other ways in Madagascar. Repeated cycles of political instability and violence have contributed to the people’s

dire poverty. As part of reconciliation efforts to help move beyond Madagascar’s repeated crises, the PC(USA) has walked alongside the FJKM church to speak out for justice and fairness.

Another example of its effectiveness is how the PC(USA) is accompanying the FJKM in the critical fight against human trafficking. The PC(USA) connected the FJKM with resources needed to help bring trafficked Malagasy women home from the Middle East (see Presbyterians Today, January/February 2016, “Notes from an Autopsy”). The FJKM also is working to educate and accompany women and children so they are not so vulnerable to trafficking.

#### PROVIDE SUPPORT

Support Dan and Elizabeth’s work in Madagascar.

[pcusa.org/donate/E200418](http://pcusa.org/donate/E200418)

# To the ends of the earth ...

## Training leaders campaign goes deep and wide to share the good news

Juan Sarmiento

Guess the locations of these situations in our world:

- A country devastated by war has seen most of its citizens leave and some of its cities occupied or reduced to rubble by terrorists. In the midst of such upheaval, many Christians are choosing to stay in their cities and share the message of Christ. They ask us to help equip their leaders to start new churches.
- A pastor feels called by God to leave his hometown and move with his family to a far region where a different language is spoken and most people don't have access to the Bible. After decades of ministry, hundreds of new churches have been planted. The pastor asks us to continue supporting the development of leaders to resource the sustained growth of the church in the region.
- A conflict-ridden part of the world has seen a steady growth in Christianity. Due to the commitment of Presbyterians in speaking up for the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized, some of their key leaders have become objects of frequent death threats. Despite the risks, our partners have invited us to support the development of new congregations in the region.

Were you able to guess these locations? Visit [pcusa.org/deepleaders](http://pcusa.org/deepleaders) to learn

### GROW THE CHURCH IN EGYPT

Help build churches and send mission workers.

[pcusa.org/donate/E052179](http://pcusa.org/donate/E052179)



Kathy Francis

A group meets to pray on a plot of land where their future church will be built in the city of Sheikh Zaid, Egypt. The Egyptian government donated 14 parcels of land to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Egypt for construction of new churches. Now financial resources are needed to fulfill the God-given promise of this land.

about the many places Presbyterian World Mission and global partners are collaborating in the formation of thousands of new church leaders.

An advisory team of diverse voices from throughout the PC(USA) had this to say about the "Training Leaders for Community Transformation" campaign:

*"We are only one piece of the larger body of Christ's church. As such we must, with urgency, seek the spiritual formation of the saints whom God is gifting in other ways around the world."* —Chris Benek, First Presbyterian Church of Fort Lauderdale

*"The formation of leaders for that sake implies not only theological training focused on the Scriptures, but also other skills like, for instance, sensitivity to the socioeconomic, historical and religious background of the community."* —Paulo Ribeiro, Woodbury Union Church

*"One of the most important contributions we as Presbyterians can*

*make is to work with such leaders."*

—Paul Pierson, Fuller Theological Seminary

*"The global church calls us to focus on training that can be multiplied, as those trained in turn can train others."*

—Jeff Ritchie, The Outreach Foundation

### Help transform communities

Your congregation can join in efforts to share the gospel by training leaders. Here's how you can get involved:

- Call 800-728-7228 x5611 or email [nicole.gerkins@pcusa.org](mailto:nicole.gerkins@pcusa.org) for information on supporting one of 30 PC(USA) mission co-workers dedicated to training leaders.
- Use #deepleaders on Facebook and Twitter.
- Email [deepleaders@pcusa.org](mailto:deepleaders@pcusa.org) or call Juan Sarmiento, international evangelism catalyst with Presbyterian World Mission, at 800-728-7228 x5262.



# The invisible Presbyterian seminary

## Mission co-workers teach and preach around the world

Jonathan Seitz

**T**ogether, we are among the largest Presbyterian faculties in the world. Our teachers instruct and preach in English, Spanish and Portuguese, Mandarin, Japanese and Arabic. Most teach aspiring pastors, but there's also a robust commitment to congregational leadership formation and lay discipleship.

I'm talking about the roughly 40 PC(USA) mission workers who teach in seminaries, Bible colleges, universities and lay academies worldwide. They teach Bible, theology, history and ministry. They build theological libraries, lead churches and write textbooks. These mission workers include **Karla Koll** in Costa Rica, **Michael Parker** in Egypt and **Dustin Ellington** in Zambia.

Some are doing creative ministry. **Tom Harvey** is dean of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies in England, which trains teachers for churches and seminaries in the developing world. **Thomas Goetz** has taught English for 20 years at a Presbyterian university in Japan, while serving in churches and acting as a bridge between Presbyterians around the world.

My family has been in Taiwan for seven years. I teach at Taiwan Seminary in Taipei, and 89 percent of our graduates are still in parish ministry a decade after graduation. The Presbyterian Church of Taiwan asks new seminary graduates to draw straws to determine where they will begin their ministry, usually in rural Taiwan.

I am part of many other ministries, such as helping a church in Taipei begin a multicultural ministry, which is going strong, and working with researchers



Johanneke Kroesbergen

Lukas Nkhoma, Jonathan Thole and Watanga Ngoma leave the classroom at Justo Mwale Theological University in Lusaka, Zambia.

to conduct the first modern survey of Christianity in Taiwan.

Ministry in Taiwan is a “whole-family” endeavor for us. My wife, Emily, serves in team ministry. Our eldest child attends a bilingual school and took part in three church camps in Mandarin or Taiwanese last summer. Our five-year-old twins attend Mandarin prekindergarten.

Those of us in theological education are a kind of “invisible seminary,” or perhaps the PC(USA)’s 12th theological school. Because we’re so dispersed, it’s easy to overlook the common mission we share.

In 2015, Presbyterian World Mission recalled eight mission co-workers in five ministries due to a funding shortfall. All of these ministries were in education. Educational ministry is often less urgent than others, but it’s important, long-term formational work. It’s the type of work at which Presbyterians excel. Teaching yields results 10, 20, 30 or 40 years later.

It’s not uncommon for me to meet

retired pastors who studied with my predecessors two generations back. The Great Commission at the end of Matthew famously includes four commands (go, baptize, make disciples and teach). The work of theological education exemplifies these commands.

Juan Sarmiento, international evangelism catalyst with Presbyterian World Mission, is spearheading the “Training Leaders for Community Transformation” campaign to develop 2,000 leaders worldwide by 2017 (#deepleaders)—leaders to share the gospel in community-transforming ways.

Please pray for PC(USA)’s invisible seminary and consider supporting one of its teachers.

### TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES

Support training of pastor-leaders.  
[pcusa.org/donate/E200102](http://pcusa.org/donate/E200102)

# Legacy of learning

## Mission co-workers train leaders for respectful witness in Indonesia

Juan Sarmiento

**W**ith support from the PC(USA), Presbyterian World Mission has helped empower women and men in Indonesia to lead congregational ministries that joyfully witness to Christ, while relating to their religiously diverse communities in constructive ways.

Indonesia has the largest population of Muslims in the world as well as one of the largest communities of Presbyterian Christians. Within the past 50 years, Christians in Indonesia have increased from about 3 percent to 10 percent of the population. Among PC(USA) partner denominations, one pastor may lead congregations with a dozen “gospel stations” in neighboring villages.

Presbyterian World Mission has focused on empowering Indonesian Christians for witness by placing mission personnel as school faculty or staff at Duta Wacana Christian University. Established to train assistants to Dutch missionaries, Duta Wacana became a seminary in 1962 and a university in 1985. Of its 4,000 students, more than 400 are pursuing a divinity degree.

Duta Wacana University’s mission statement is “Obeying God, walking in integrity, striving for excellence, and



Sarjinen

PC(USA) mission co-worker Farsijana Adeney-Risakotta (right) empowers women farmers in the village of Gabuk, in Gunung Kidul.

serving the world.” The university is a founding partner of the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS). The ICRS offers a Ph.D. program in which leaders from various faith traditions worldwide pursue interdisciplinary research on the common problems faced by our communities.

One example of leadership formation in offering respectful witness is GKI Gejayan Church in Yogyakarta. Since 2000, the church has grown to include about 7,000 worshippers on a typical weekend, the majority being of college age.

Prayer is at the core of the life of GKI Gejayan Church. Even non-Christians come to pray in their prayer garden. The church maintains good relationships with other religious communities by visiting madrasas (Muslim schools) and other diverse houses of worship in the city, as

well as by welcoming visitors from other faith traditions to GKI.

A key question is how GKI Gejayan Church, with a staff of eight, can accomplish all it does. The congregation places a high value on its School of Ministry, which equips all members in ministries of prayer, discipleship, music and counseling. Faculty from Duta Wacana Christian University also volunteer to teach classes at the training school.

When asked, “What do you do if someone in the congregation has a negative view of people of other religions?” Esaol Agustriawan, prayer coordinator for GKI Gejayan Church, responds, “We take them with us to serve our diverse community and learn how to love it.”

By supporting PC(USA) mission co-workers, you make it possible for many more leaders to display and declare God’s love in Jesus Christ in respectful ways in Indonesia and beyond.

**Bernie and Farsijana Adeney-Risakotta** are faculty members at Duta Wacana Christian University. Bernie helps lead the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, and Farsijana is director of the House of Authentic Sense, which empowers impoverished villages.

**Don and Sook Choi** serve on the faculty of Duta Wacana Christian University. Don is advisor to the university’s president and helps build international networks to strengthen the school’s graduate program. Sook teaches art and English.

### HELP TRAIN LEADERS IN INDONESIA

- ▶ Support Bernie and Farsijana’s work.  
[pcusa.org/donate/E200303](https://pcusa.org/donate/E200303)
- ▶ Support Don and Sook’s work.  
[pcusa.org/donate/E200523](https://pcusa.org/donate/E200523)



# 'Turn to the Living God'

## Be reconciled, renewed and sent to change the world as Jesus did

Juan Sarmiento



CEDEPCA

In Guatemala, the Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America (CEDEPCA) offers an Introduction to the Bible course through its Biblical Pastoral Institute.

The 203rd General Assembly (1991) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) unanimously approved the resolution document titled “Turn to the Living God: A Call to Evangelism in Jesus Christ’s Way,” which articulates the church’s commitment to global evangelism.

No Internet, text messages, smartphones or social networks existed 25 years ago. Although the term “missional” was not in vogue yet, many had started to question if mere “church growth” techniques were truly the best way to ready God’s people to share the good news.

“Turn to the Living God” is as timely, theologically grounded and applicable today as it was a quarter of a century ago. It calls the church to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to:

- announce the good news that in Christ Jesus the world is reconciled to God;
- tell all nations and peoples of Christ’s call to repentance, faith, and obedience;
- proclaim in deed and word that Jesus

gave himself to set people free;

- offer in Christ’s name fullness of life now and forever;
- call people everywhere to believe in and follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; and
- invite them into the community of faith to worship and serve the triune God.

(from the concluding affirmation in “Turn to the Living God”)

We invite you to join us in recognizing this anniversary by:

- reflecting on “evangelism.” What should it look like in light of the changing realities of our times?
- sharing stories, resources and best practices for declaring and displaying Christ’s love, and
- supporting the ministry of evangelism at home and abroad.

Visit [pcusa.org/calltoshare25](http://pcusa.org/calltoshare25) to download a free copy of “Turn to the Living God: A Call to Evangelism in Jesus Christ’s Way.”

### Be engaged

The Engage curriculum invites participants to a journey of prayer and faith-sharing. Developed in partnership with the Office of Evangelism of the PC(USA) and Congregational Ministries Publishing, Engage helps connect the church with its community and equips members to live out and share their growing faith.

Engage is organized in three units: Engage Gospel; Engage Discipleship; and Engage Mission. Each unit includes seven sessions designed to make spreading the good news of Jesus Christ easier for growing disciples.

“As people claim and live into their own stories of transformation, they will join in God’s transforming mission in their neighborhoods,” says Ray Jones, PC(USA) coordinator for evangelism.

To purchase, go to [pcusastore.com](http://pcusastore.com) and type Engage in the search bar, or call Presbyterian Distribution Service at 800-524-2612. It is available in English, Spanish and Korean.



**HELP SHARE THE GOSPEL**

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# YAV called to seminary and social work

## Volunteering helps prepare heart, mind and spirit to serve God's people

Angela Williams

A year after Typhoon Yolanda (international name Haiyan) made landfall in the central Philippines, less than 1 percent of those displaced had received permanent housing. This is the harsh truth I learned during a community protest in Tacloban in 2014, one month into my Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) year.

I joined my host family for an ecumenical memorial service to remember lives lost in the typhoon and to protest the agonizingly slow recovery. The worship led into the protest so seamlessly that it was difficult to decipher the difference between worshiping God and protesting injustice.

Thousands from across the country came to demonstrate against their government, which they feel is too closely tied to U.S. interests. In this large crowd, I was one of four white faces. I thought, 'How can I stand in solidarity with my new community when the body I occupy is a direct representation of the colonial power they are organizing against?' My fellow YAVs and I knew it was important to be present, and yet I was extremely uncomfortable. I didn't feel worthy to stand next to those who had lost loved ones in one of the strongest tropical cyclones ever recorded. The community, however, lovingly welcomed me.

Following the memorial service, I watched in awe as a woman stood on a vehicle, megaphone in hand, and



YAV Angela Williams (right) and her host mom/supervisor Doberth Mahika Tindoy Moriles take a break in the canteen of National Heroes Institute in Kananga, Leyte, Philippines. The institute is a private school dedicated to providing a quality Christian education to all students, especially the poor.

organized 20,000 people into a single file procession. In that moment, I felt a distinct call to community organizing. Leaving the march, I began discerning a second YAV year. Currently I'm serving in Washington, D.C., with NEXT Church and New York Avenue Presbyterian Church.

After becoming aware of countless examples of systemic injustice, such as a trend among some older white men from Europe and the U.S. flocking to the Philippines to pursue women significantly younger, I want to join movements in my country where I have the voice to challenge systems that allow exploitation. Through new experiences, I have learned how to responsibly analyze my contexts, privileges and spiritual gifts, which are continually transforming my call.

Before I joined the YAV program, I had checked all the Presbyterian boxes: pastor's kid, Montreat, Triennium, Pastor Nominating Committee, church choirs and camps, Young Adult Advisory

Delegate. Even though I'd always planned to go to seminary, I had never before felt called into parish ministry. How would I fill my intellectual craving for academic knowledge while staying true to a God who challenges us to love those deemed "the least of these?"

This year, through my work as a YAV in D.C., I'm learning to faithfully accompany those experiencing homelessness while imagining the future of the church. Similar to the Philippines, when I feel isolated, hopeless and frustrated by my own inability to "fix" the situation, I'm still encouraged by my Philippine host-mother who perseveres against root causes of poverty through education as a school administrator at the National Heroes Institute. Her example stays with me in D.C. and as I venture into seminary to pursue masters degrees in divinity and social work. I am thankful for my years of service that have helped me examine my initial call through new lenses and work for God's heaven on earth.

### INVEST IN YOUNG ADULTS

- ▶ Support the YAV program.  
[pcusa.org/donate/E049075](http://pcusa.org/donate/E049075)
- ▶ Invite a young adult to serve.  
[pcusa.org/yav](http://pcusa.org/yav)



# Daniel's calling

## South Sudan Education and Peacebuilding Project transforms communities

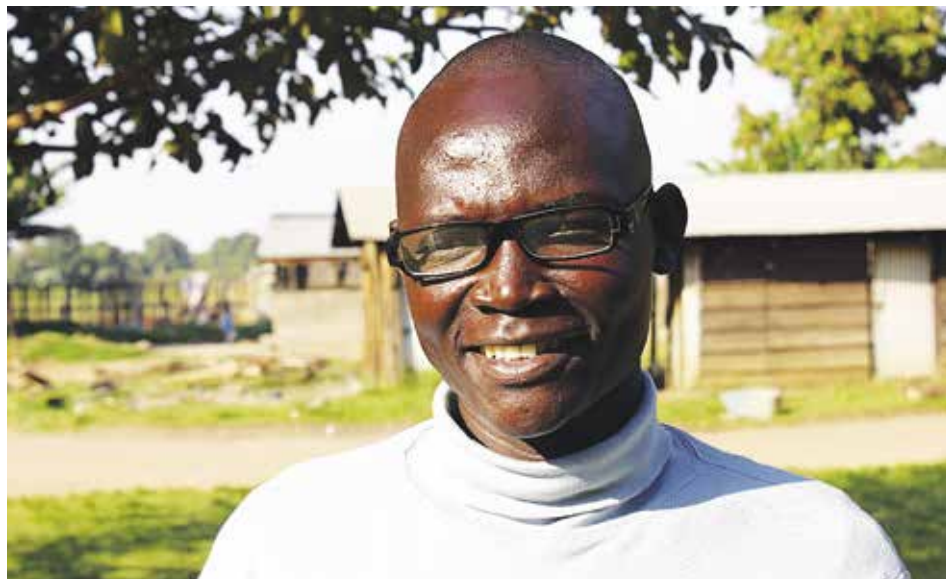
Leisa Wagstaff

The tears flowed abundantly from Daniel's eyes, although his society is one in which men do not cry, especially not in public. Overwhelmed with emotion, Daniel said, "I thank God for choosing me to become a teacher."

Daniel's display of sincerity reverberated throughout the academic year-end gathering as many of his classmates nodded their heads in agreement. All eight of the South Sudan Education and Peacebuilding Project's teacher training scholarship recipients had just returned from their first year of studies. By any standards, the year had been downright difficult: full of new experiences and adjustments, and living without and missing family. For Daniel and three other students, these challenges were similar to those they had lived with most of their lives in one of the most marginalized areas of South Sudan. Decades of civil war between Sudan's Khartoum-based government in the north, rebel forces in the south and inter-ethnic conflict have left Daniel's native Anuak people in Pochalla simply trying to survive.

Pochalla itself is isolated, without road access, especially during the rainy season. Commodities are either ferried by bicycles from neighboring Ethiopia (8-10 hours one way) or by air from South Sudan's capital city at exorbitant prices. Health care services, functioning water points, and other basic services are limited. Without phone service or Internet coverage, communication with family members throughout the school year depends on hand-carried messages to and from the area.

Pochalla natives, like most South Sudanese, have had few or no educational opportunities for the past 50 years.



Daniel Omot Nyingwo is one of the PC(USA) scholarship recipients at Yei Teacher Training College in South Sudan.

During the prolonged conflicts, Daniel had to flee for his life to surrounding countries for three to four years at a time. He was fortunate, though. These periods of refuge and separation from his family and everything familiar provided opportunities for basic education.

From the beginning of his teacher training, Daniel understood there would be difficulties, but he chose not to relinquish the enduring dream of the Pochalla community to provide educational opportunities for its members. However, he knows that for education to become a reality, an intentional, holistic approach must be taken. He understands that a sick child cannot go to school; a hungry learner concentrates only on hunger pains; a pupil without textbooks, pencil and paper disturbs classmates by asking to borrow their supplies; and one who has to walk miles to fetch water and firewood before and after school may nap during lessons.

Daniel and his colleagues do not rest on their two-month school holiday break. Instead, they prepare lessons they will teach, thatch roofs for others, prepare for planting season, encourage parents to send girls to school, and serve as role models. They also collaborate to provide a youth camp to promote peace through tutoring, trauma healing, self-awareness, esteem building and Bible study.

"It is up to us as teachers to be agents of change in our communities," Daniel adds. "This is a most privileged calling."

### SUPPORT EDUCATION

- ▶ Support Leisa's work in South Sudan. [pcusa.org/donate/E200501](https://pcusa.org/donate/E200501)
- ▶ Help train more teachers like Daniel. [pcusa.org/donate/E052172](https://pcusa.org/donate/E052172)

# 'The least of these' lead the way at Blessed School in Beirut

Scott Parker

Despite its history of civil war and its current challenges with poverty and the refugee crisis, the city of Beirut remains fertile ground for those seeking wealth, status and power. For Muslims and Christians, the cultural ethos of pride/shame places a high value on education, success and providing for one's family.

In such an achievement-based culture, those with disabilities are often considered "invisible." In addition to the social stigma, those who are blind, physically disabled or developmentally challenged are not given the same access to jobs, education and funding as the rest of society.

Blessed, established in 1868 as a school for the blind, challenges this cultural reality head-on. Its approximately 60 students reflect a spectrum of disabilities: blindness, Down syndrome, autism and other developmental challenges. Students are taught to read, manage life tasks, and earn an income through skills such as baking and basket-making.

Director Linda Macktaby's efforts to empower students with disabilities reach far beyond teaching them skills to function in society. Blessed has become a community in which the "least of these" lead the way in ministering to the needs of the greater community.

Even though many of the students are



Scott Parker

from impoverished families, Blessed has recently taken steps to address poverty related to rising unemployment and the influx of Syrian refugees. Each week, Blessed students cook and box hundreds of take-away meals that they distribute to those lacking proper nutrition.

In Lebanon, Syrian refugees are restricted from employment in most professions because they would take jobs away from citizens. Although Blessed has two Syrian teachers, they work as volunteers as it is illegal to give them a salary.

Although the school itself operates on a shoestring, Blessed enrolls Syrian students with special needs despite their inability to pay. One Syrian family has been given a scholarship amounting to 90 percent of the annual tuition. Another family cannot pay at all, so the father performs odd jobs at the school on weekends.

It is in Blessed's use of music and daily worship that perhaps its most profound societal impact can be seen. Music and dance are a treasured part of Lebanese culture, and the children are taught traditional songs, instruments and dances that are presented at public concerts. Being a church-based school, songs and stories about Jesus and God's unconditional love are incorporated in daily worship. These gatherings, which include Christian and Muslim students, are, surprisingly, encouraged by families of both faiths. Through the experience of having a child with special needs, these families find a common bond of acceptance in which the dividing walls are torn down.

Each week, Blessed students prepare hundreds of meals to distribute to impoverished people.

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- ▶ Support Scott and Elmarie's work in the Middle East.  
[pcusa.org/donate/E200504](https://pcusa.org/donate/E200504)
- ▶ Support refugee children.  
[pcusa.org/donate/E052184](https://pcusa.org/donate/E052184)



# Education requires sacrifice and a passion for learning

Cindy Corell



Cindy Corell

Paul Sinette Pierre with her son, Carlins, 10.

**T**he pair of shiny, ankle-high boy's boots sat in my kitchen most of that day.

I'd seen Paul Sinette standing outside the gate when I left my house that morning. Paul Sinette works in my house, usually showing up about 9:30 each morning. She cooks, cleans house and generally makes my life better.

She teaches me about the culture of Haiti by sharing her life with me. She tries hard to understand the American lifestyle that I often revert to, sometimes preferring French fries and macaroni and cheese to the Creole meals of rice and beans, soups and natural juices.

But mostly, through her devotion to her 10-year-old son, Carlins, she teaches me the value of an education in this impoverished country.

That morning, Paul Sinette seemed surprised to see me leaving so early. She grinned at me and said in Creole that she was waiting for the shoe shine guy to

finish with the boots. She didn't have to tell me whose they were. She has a special grin she shares when anything has to do with Carlins.

He's a tall boy, funny and studious with a touch of mischief. Paul Sinette tells me of his misadventures—crashing the secondhand bike she found for him for Christmas, trying to get out of his homework with funny stories and making excuses when his grades slipped one grading period.

And then there's the morning that Paul Sinette came rushing into the house with a manila envelope. She pulled out Carlins' report card. ALL of his grades had gone up.

Still grinning, she carefully put the report card back into the envelope and tucked it into her purse.

One afternoon when school dismissed early, Carlins came to the house to wait for his mom. While she finished working, he completed his homework.

The United Nations Development Program reports that Haitians who are 25 and older received on average only 4.9 years of education, and only 29 percent attended secondary school.

According to World Bank statistics, even though as many as 90 percent of Haitian children are enrolled in school, less than 30 percent are at the age-appropriate grade level. And 80 percent of schools in Haiti are operated by private organizations, rather than the Haitian government.

A good number of those private schools are sponsored in part by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations.

The parents I know in Haiti have a strong desire to send their children to school. They sacrifice to pay the tuition, and they will find the best schools they can afford.

Paul Sinette stopped going to school when she was 10. She'd gotten sick, and by the time she recovered, her parents could no longer afford the fees. But her child will go to school. No matter the cost. No matter the sacrifice.

I caught myself glancing at Carlins' boots sitting in my kitchen most of that afternoon. They reminded me, again, of the work so many of us are doing here to improve the lives of Haitian people.

And they reminded me, especially, of what the Haitian people are doing for themselves.

## PROVIDE SUPPORT

Support Cindy's work in Haiti.  
[pcusa.org/donate/E200482](https://pcusa.org/donate/E200482)

# Build Congo Schools

## Initiative provides funds for buildings, books, teacher training and more

Tammy Warren

Not long ago, when PC(USA) mission co-worker Gwenda Fletcher visited a primary school in Munkamba in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, she saw four small classrooms made of sticks and palm fronds. Other classes met outdoors under trees. Children sat on the ground or on logs. Teachers wrote lessons with tiny sticks of chalk on pieces of old tin roofing.

Congolese Presbyterian churches are committed to empowering children through education. The churches run nearly 1,000 primary and secondary schools in East and West Kasai and other provinces. These schools are located in cities and rural areas across 1,400 miles of jungles and savannas. Only 18 percent are built with durable materials.

Congo's pervasive poverty means that 80 percent of its primary and secondary school buildings are in a very needy state. Poverty also prevents schools from providing books, desks, teacher training, equipment like chalkboards and scholarships for girls and orphans.

**Build Congo Schools (BCS)**—formerly the Congo Education Excellence Project—began in 2009. The project grew from a vision proposed by Dr. Joseph Mulumba, head of the Congolese Presbyterian Church (CPC), to provide hope and quality education in all of Congo's Presbyterian schools.

Dr. Mulumba had visited Tom and



Frank Dimmock

Children line up to enter Bulunda Primary School, operated by the Congolese Presbyterian Church, in Tshikaji, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Jan Sullivan and other members of First Presbyterian Church in Evanston, Illinois, in 2005, and invited the church to send a team to see schools in the Congo. After visiting 25 schools, talking with students, teachers and principals, the team was amazed at the commitment of the Congolese people to education.

Dr. Mulumba asked the U.S. team to facilitate a formal planning process of two groups of Congolese education leaders and collaborate with the CPC in transforming their schools into quality learning environments. Accepting the challenge, the U.S. team spent two weeks in Congo assisting the CPC in carefully thinking through its educational priorities to address five priority areas: improving infrastructure, increasing teacher training, providing textbooks for teachers in all subjects and grade levels, providing transportation for school supervisors to make visits and offering scholarships to

help increase enrollment and retention of girls.

This strategic planning model, which builds the capacity of our partner church and puts the church in the position of authority, has been lifted up by Presbyterian World Mission as a best practice for other partnerships.

Although the priority areas are of equal importance, improving infrastructure through durable buildings is of great concern. "We have rain nine months of the year," Gwenda says. "If the kids are in a school with a thatch roof when it rains, they are sent home."

So far three remote rural schools have been rebuilt, and the CPC has identified the next three schools to be transformed. Progress has been made in the training of teachers, supervision and resourcing of schools, and creating a safe and healthy learning environment for children.

For more information about Congo's schools, visit [buildcongoschools.org](http://buildcongoschools.org).

### TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES

- ▶ Support Gwenda and John's work in Congo.  
[pcusa.org/donate/E200529](http://pcusa.org/donate/E200529)
- ▶ Help build and equip a school in Congo.  
[pcusa.org/donate/E051843](http://pcusa.org/donate/E051843)



# Education empowers and transforms

## Campaign aims to provide quality education for 1 million children by 2020

Frank Dimmock

The “Educate a Child, Transform the World” campaign was launched at the 221st General Assembly (2014) as part of the initiative to address the root causes of global poverty. In order to effectively end poverty in all countries, children must be equipped with the basic skills to reach their God-given potential as resilient and productive adults. Education is a public good and a basic human right.

Jesus’ attention to the well-being of children was important to his ministry. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has nearly 180 years of history of supporting quality education for all children globally.

Working with global partners and Presbyterians in the U.S., Presbyterian World Mission continues to strengthen quality education through:

- Strengthening teacher training and resourcing (see page 9)
- Providing educational opportunities to vulnerable children (see page 10)
- Keeping kids in school (see page 11)
- Improving school infrastructure and resources (see page 12)
- Increasing access to quality early childhood education (see story below)

For details on the global campaign,



Frank Dimmock

In Tondo, some families live under bridges like this one.

visit [pcusa.org/globalpoverty](http://pcusa.org/globalpoverty).

The national component of this campaign was launched in 2015 to support and advocate for improved public education for all children in the U.S. Domestic objectives focus on:

- Elevating the quantity and quality of early childhood programs offered in and by Presbyterian congregations

- Reducing dropout rates
  - Increasing healthy extracurricular activities and supplemental learning opportunities
  - Promoting parent and community participation in school activities
  - Advocating for equitable access and increased resources for public education
- To learn more, visit [pcusa.org/child](http://pcusa.org/child).

### PRESCHOOL IN THE PHILIPPINES

Rapid urban growth in many developing countries has led to increased poverty levels and stressful living environments.

In Manila, capital of the Philippines, there are an estimated 12 million people, making it the most densely populated city in the world: 26,630 people per square mile. PC(USA)’s partner, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, is

reaching out to destitute populations in the city. The congregation of the district of Tondo provides a preschool program for 56 children living under a bridge near the dump. The children are welcomed into church activities, and supportive connections are made with vulnerable families. The preschool program, initiated by a PC(USA) partner, is a demonstration of Christ’s love for the “least of these.”

### TAKE ACTION

- ▶ Support the international campaign. [pcusa.org/donate/E052143](http://pcusa.org/donate/E052143)
- ▶ Support the national campaign. [pcusa.org/donate/E052178](http://pcusa.org/donate/E052178)
- ▶ Support mission personnel working in education. [pcusa.org/donate/E200101](http://pcusa.org/donate/E200101)

# Speak Up! Stop Sexual Violence

## Host a 'Courageous Conversation' in October

Shannon Beck

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 48 women are raped every hour, according to a 2014 study by Caritas Internationalis, an aid and development organization. This harsh reality is a result of decades of war, during which internal and external militias invade and compete for the country's precious mineral resources. Although Congo is arguably the richest country in Africa, it ranks among the poorest countries on the continent, based on the United Nations Multidimensional Poverty Index.

Our partner, the Church of Christ in Congo, offers a healing place for injured and ostracized women. These women receive medical attention and surgery, spiritual healing and recovery, and safety as they become reintegrated into daily life. And now, many of the women who have lost their children to war, often murdered in their presence, are adopting other children orphaned by the same atrocities. If it weren't for the church that took on the critical task of speaking the unspeakable, things would be much worse for survivors.

In 2015, many Presbyterian churches in the United States hosted "Courageous Conversations," teaching, preaching and creating a service of healing, to encourage and deepen conversations about sexual violence.

One of the most compelling responses we received from the initial effort last October was from a church that responded "Yes! We are a courageous congregation!"

And it is true. Many Presbyterians are responding to the pressing needs of the world, locally and globally.

Stopping sexual violence, particularly in marginalized communities, creates healing spaces to interrupt cycles of violence, restores women to become thriving contributors to society, and shares the good news of Jesus Christ as healer, savior, justice-creator and reconciler.

It is time to initiate and plan to have a Courageous Conversation in your community during October. Join a global effort to stop sexual violence by teaching, preaching or hosting a service of healing.

Here are a few ideas to encourage Courageous Conversations in your community:

- Learn more about hosting a Courageous Conversation at [pcusa.org/courageousconversations](http://pcusa.org/courageousconversations).
- Support a mission co-worker working for reconciliation in cultures of violence:

**Christi Boyd** is the facilitator for women and children's interests in French-speaking Africa.

[pcusa.org/donate/E200314](http://pcusa.org/donate/E200314)

**Cathy Chang and Juan Lopez**

address migration and human trafficking issues in Southeast Asia.

[pcusa.org/donate/E200533](http://pcusa.org/donate/E200533)

**Jo Ella Holman** serves in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Cuba and throughout the Caribbean.

[pcusa.org/donate/E200376](http://pcusa.org/donate/E200376)

**Brian and Sandi Thompson-Royer** empower women through the National Presbyterian Church of Guatemala.

[pcusa.org/donate/E200334](http://pcusa.org/donate/E200334)

- Join a growing network of advocates addressing human trafficking, including sex trafficking. Contact Shannon Beck at [shannon.beck@pcusa.org](mailto:shannon.beck@pcusa.org).

- Join in a travel study seminar on human trafficking to Thailand, November 1-10, 2016. Learn how Presbyterian World Mission co-workers and global partners are working together to break the chains of human trafficking and change the lives of women and children in Southeast Asia. For details, contact Stephanie Caudill at [stephanie.caudill@pcusa.org](mailto:stephanie.caudill@pcusa.org).

*"Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."*

Joshua 1:9



# Celebrating resilience through theater

Dessa Quesada Palm



YATTA members perform a play about the plight of children who live in the city's landfills.

Every Saturday in the Casa Esperanza shelter, Gail (name changed) assists artist-trainer Onna in arts-based sessions for girls who have survived sexual abuse. On Sundays, Gail volunteers as an interpreter for the deaf during worship at the Little Children of the Philippines. Occasionally she performs in an advocacy play produced by Youth Advocates Through Theater Arts (YATTA) on the issue of teen pregnancy and adolescent reproductive health. She is also an officer in the Gender Watch Against Violence and Exploitation (GWAVE) Teen Advocates.

This portrait of a motivated, civic-minded young person is admirable, especially since Gail's path has been difficult. She arrived at the shelter at age 12 because her mother's live-in boyfriend had sexually abused her. That was not, however, her first time at the Casa: she had come earlier because of the battering her mother had experienced.

I met Gail during a workshop designed to encourage girls to recognize their strengths and dreams. Afterward,

participants collectively composed a song:

*We wish to join our families again  
We wish to be able to live in peace  
We wish to be able to work.*

*But there are many problems in our homes  
We are faced with frequent abuse  
We are faced with poverty  
Making it difficult to reach our dreams.*

*That is why we resolve to find our strength  
And to do our best at school  
Rely on ourselves, our companions,  
and God.*

GWAVE assists girls through counseling and filing legal actions, which may lead to the imprisonment of perpetrators. GWAVE also provides a Survivor Empowerment Program to promote leadership through activities such as train the trainer and peer counseling.

YATTA partnered with GWAVE to produce a fast-paced, witty performance about laws related to gender-based violence, specifically human trafficking,

domestic violence, rape and child abuse. The actors portrayed women and girls GWAVE has assisted. In one year, YATTA has performed the piece for more than 5,000 people in government centers, churches and schools, on basketball courts and even under a mango tree. YATTA's presentation has drawn attention to gender-based violence and has inspired other groups, such as Christian Youth Fellowship members of the Dumaguete United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), to restage the segment tackling human trafficking as part of the church's program Tahas Dangpanan (Project Shelter).

YATTA also began to develop learning modules on children's rights, positive discipline, adolescent reproductive health, psychosocial support and community action for survivors of disasters. The workshops are now conducted by the youth themselves, allowing them to mentor and organize youth in schools, churches, communities and nongovernmental organizations. They are able to connect more intimately to the voice, the yearning and needs of other young people, while becoming role models.

Four years ago, Gail decided to join YATTA while remaining active in the GWAVE survivors group. Although she is still carrying a weight from her experience of abuse, her resilience has been affirmed and her artistic and organizational gifts have been harnessed. When she reflects on her journey, Gail says, "All these gave me the strength to journey on. Life goes on."

## PROVIDE SUPPORT

Support Dessa and Cobbie's work in the Philippines.

[pcusa.org/donate/E200393](https://pcusa.org/donate/E200393)



# New mobile gaming app raises awareness, combats human trafficking

## App helps students identify red flags and false leads of traffickers

Tammy Warren



Jill Bolander Cohen, founder and executive director of the Lifeboat Project

A new anime-style gaming app for mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, has an extraordinary mission: to keep children and young adults, ages 11 to 14, from becoming victims of human traffickers.

After two years in development, the **ACT (Awareness Combats Trafficking)** app is now available for free download through the iOS app store, Google Play and **Lifeboat-ACT.com**.

The ACT app is the brainchild of lifelong Presbyterian Jill Bolander Cohen, founder and executive director of the Lifeboat Project, a Central Florida nonprofit that works to fight human trafficking. The app, which is available in English and Spanish, is designed to educate junior high and high school students about the dangerous, ever-changing schemes of traffickers.

"Based on calls to the National Trafficking Hotline, Florida ranks third in the nation for trafficking, and my church sits about two minutes from one of the most heavily trafficked parts of our state," Cohen says.

The Lifeboat Project received

support from the U.S. Department of Defense to create the main framework, and philanthropists stepped forward to fund development of the gaming app through Orlando-based Engineering and Computer Simulation (ECS). It has been well received by educators and students who took part in beta testing. The app has already won two silver awards in the categories of education and gaming, presented by Horizon Interactive Awards.

"We're so excited about the rollout of this app," Cohen says. "Even in its early stages it is gaining the attention of legislators and educators across Florida and around the country."

Cohen says that representatives from the Lifeboat Project and ECS have had meetings with several agencies in Washington, D.C., including the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime, the Department of Education and the White House. "All agencies felt the ACT app is one of the best tools in educating our children about human trafficking," she says.

The developers worked to strike a balance that isn't "too broad" or "too scary," but one in which the students learn from the characters' stories to be alert and aware at all times.

"So far 12 counties in Florida have committed to put the gaming app in their curriculum," Cohen says. "Our hope for the app is not only to bring prevention and awareness, but to leverage businesses using the app to help fund long-term housing and care for survivors."

"As traffickers change their tactics," she says, "We hope to stay 10 steps ahead of them by developing new scenes to educate our youth."

.....  
**For more information, visit [thelifeboatproject.org](http://thelifeboatproject.org) or email [thelifeboatproject@gmail.com](mailto:thelifeboatproject@gmail.com).**

If you suspect the crime of human trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline at 888-373-7888. The center can coordinate with law enforcement and social service agencies to help the victim.



Awareness Combats Trafficking (ACT), a free mobile gaming app, is designed to help protect teens and preteens from becoming victims of human trafficking.



# MISSION TOOLKIT

Ellen Sherby

## Tips for strengthening congregational mission

### Develop a missional identity.

Does your church have a clear focus for its specific calling in mission? If not, the mission committee can work together prayerfully to discern God's call. Discernment can include exploring what you are already doing and where there is mission and outreach energy churchwide. It can also involve identifying new connections in your community and beyond. It's important that a process of discernment draw on the collective sense of call to the congregation rather than on the interests and passion of just a few individuals.

### Create a framework for mission activities.

Once you have a missional identity, establish criteria for future mission activities, projects and partnerships that reflect your focus. Is the focus on

a particular issue, like homelessness or hunger? Does it seek to serve certain populations, like children, immigrants or refugees, or the elderly? Keeping most congregational mission activity aligned with a clear focus will cultivate a sense of purpose and will foster healthy stewardship of resources.

### Engage the congregation in deep learning about mission as a two-way street.

Serving in God's mission is part of our calling as Christians. Learning about mission as a mutual connection between those who serve and those who are served is a rich part of the journey of service and of Christian faith. God is present in the people whom we believe we are serving. What "mission values" do you teach in Sunday school and in preparing people

in your church to serve others locally and globally?

Learn and share mission stories in worship, fellowship and Christian education. Weave mission stories into every aspect of congregational life to celebrate what God is doing in your community and around the world, and how your congregation is called to mission service. Find ways to share the stories of life-transforming relationships and connections in mission during moments for mission, church potlucks, Bible studies, Sunday school classes and as sermon illustrations for children and adults. What are the mission stories you share from your own community? What are the stories you can bring to your church from across the world? How can the stories invite others in the church to get involved through prayer, mission activities or giving?

## Free mission-related resources available online

World Mission has resources to equip you as you engage in God's mission. Whether you have questions as a church or presbytery, a small group or synod, these resources are designed to help you.

- "Organize Your Mission Committee" includes tools for discernment, planning and evaluation ([pcusa.org/missionresources](http://pcusa.org/missionresources)).
- "Start a Mission Partnership" and "Plan a Mission Trip" provide helpful resources for learning about mutual mission or mission in partnership ([pcusa.org/missionresources](http://pcusa.org/missionresources)).
- Download the "2016 Mission Guidebook," a comprehensive resource for congregational mission learning, discernment, strategy and engagement ([pcusa.org/missionresources](http://pcusa.org/missionresources)).
- Find "letters from mission co-workers" and stories of their work around the world ([pcusa.org/missionconnections](http://pcusa.org/missionconnections)).
- Visit "YAV blogs" to read the latest updates from Young Adult Volunteers serving at more than 20 national and international sites ([pcusa.org/yav](http://pcusa.org/yav)).



# An invitation

## Sessions and congregations

For your convenience, we are providing a few simple options for you to use in submitting your gifts. Congregations can send contributions through regular receiving channels, usually presbyteries, or send Directed Mission Support (DMS) gifts directly to the address below. Those gifts designated to DMS accounts will be reported to the presbytery. We urge you to report DMS contributions directly to your presbytery in order to keep them informed of your denominational support.

## Individuals

Individuals should use the numbers beginning with E to provide financial support to specific mission workers. If you desire, you can also give online at **[presbyterianmission.org/supportwm](http://presbyterianmission.org/supportwm)**. You may also write the name of the mission co-worker on the memo line of the check; mail it to the address below, and we will confirm your designation and intent.

## Give to the sending and support of your mission co-workers:

- Visit **[pcusa.org/supportwm](http://pcusa.org/supportwm)**.
- Call 800-728-7228 x5611.

## Please send gifts to:

Presbyterian World Mission  
PO Box 643700  
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700  
Please make checks payable to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

## For additional information, please contact:

Nicole Gerkins  
Program Assistant  
Funds Development Ministry  
[nicole.gerkins@pcusa.org](mailto:nicole.gerkins@pcusa.org)



# Transcending divides

## Bill and Bonnie Clarke make relationships a priority with their mission support

Pat Cole

**W**hile Bonnie Clarke's Spanish was rusty on her first trip to Guatemala, she quickly began to experience the people in ways that transcended verbal communication.

"I remember the first Guatemalan worship service our delegation attended," she shares. "It was a rustic, profoundly community-centered experience in which we immediately felt like family before a very near God."

Bonnie and her husband, Bill, first visited Guatemala in 2000 as part of a Baltimore Presbytery mission partnership. Bonnie, the only person in the group with a significant knowledge of Spanish, served as translator. The couples' rapport with Guatemalan Presbyterians developed rapidly.

More than two dozen trips later, the Clarks have expanded their relationships with Guatemalans, grown in their understanding of mission, and discovered the importance of regular mission support. Yet they acknowledge they and others in their presbytery encountered a learning curve.

"We started with the old model of sending money and doing 'for,' rather than 'with,'" Bill says. "As our partnership evolved, it was clear our relationship had to become one of equals and empowerment, but that is difficult for empowered North Americans to embrace."

Strong partner organizations and mission co-workers offered guidance so the partnerships could advance. Recognizing the valuable role of mission co-workers in partnerships, the Clarks decided to make financial gifts to their ministries. They support Brian and Sandi



Bill and Bonnie Clarke's long involvement in Guatemala has heightened their appreciation of healthy relationships, partner organizations and mission co-workers.

Thompson-Royer, who work in leadership development alongside the Presbyterian women's organization in Guatemala; Amanda Craft, regional liaison for Mexico and Guatemala; and Karla Koll, a theological studies professor in Costa Rica who once served in Guatemala.

Mission co-workers' model of servant leadership imitates Jesus' ministry, Bonnie says. Jesus, she explains, related to people "by affirming their presence and worth, drawing out their capabilities and accepting their experience of God."

The Clarks devote considerable time and resources to Presbyterian mission and other philanthropic activities in the United States and abroad. Before retirement, Bill was a commodities trader, and Bonnie was a teacher. She also served their congregation, Ashland Presbyterian in Hunt Valley, Maryland, as a Christian educator.

Internationally, the Clarks often work through faith-based groups. "Community and human development assisted by faith partners give a true advantage in helping people help themselves. The human trust

and equality established are augmented by the power of God to transform people's lives," Bill says.

The Clarks support the Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America (CEDEPCA), a longtime World Mission partner that recently entered into a partnership with Baltimore Presbytery. "CEDEPCA's work embraces a biblical message of transformation and renewal that reaches the hearts of people whose faith was formed by colonial theology seeking control rather than liberation," Bonnie emphasizes. "Now, women and men learn to read the Bible contextually, practice compassionate pastoral care and become faithful church and community leaders."

Over the years, the Clarks have gained satisfaction from seeing people reclaim their lives and fostering relationships that cross traditional divides. Bill says, "Making relationships with people you would not expect to be in relationship with illustrates so wonderfully the concept that we are all interdependent and equal in God's eyes."

Presbyterian World Mission brings God's global family together to address the root causes of poverty, work toward reconciliation and proclaim God's saving love in Jesus Christ.

## God's mission in Africa

*Empowering women and children*

**Janet Guyer** is a PC(USA) mission co-worker and facilitator for Women's and Children's Interests in English-speaking Africa, including Malawi, Ethiopia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

"Working with things that concern women and children, their gifts, their needs and their relationships with the church and community is a joy," Janet says. "At the same time, I know there is great heartbreak."

Janet hears the stories of widows who, after losing their husbands, lose everything else. "In some traditions the husband's family can come and take everything the widow has, including the children," she says. She also hears the joyful stories of how the church comes alongside widows to share the all-encompassing love of God.

"Women want training to provide income for their families. They want to keep their children in school. They want to live free of emotional and physical abuse. They want what we all want, what we all deserve—a life of shalom, of fullness and hope as people of God."

Janet's first Presbyterian mission appointment, in 1990, focused on assisting the Church of Christ in Thailand in responding to the HIV and AIDS pandemic. She was invited to take her experience to Africa in 2002, where she worked for 11 years as a regional consultant focused on preventing the spread of AIDS and caring for those affected by it.

**Support Janet in Africa.**

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Jodi McGill

## God's mission in Asia

*Training faith-filled leaders*

PC(USA) mission co-worker **Jonathan Seitz** is a professor of missiology and theology at Taiwan Graduate School of Theology in Taipei. His wife, **Emily**, serves in team ministry and hopes to work in a library or teach library science in the coming years.

For seven years, Jonathan has taught the next generation of Presbyterian pastors in Taiwan. Students study for three years and after graduating, draw straws to see where they will begin their ministries. Taiwan has been marginalized in the international community, and Presbyterians have been staunch voices in the search for human rights and independence. The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan's connection to the PC(USA) and the worldwide church is deeply important to it.

"I am often moved by my students," says Jonathan. "Many of them are first-generation Christians, and they make great sacrifices to come to seminary. It's refreshing how deeply their faith marks every part of their life. Students organize early morning prayer sessions, pray spontaneously for those who are struggling, fast and give unsparingly of their time and energy." Jonathan hopes that today's students will be a blessing to the church for this rising generation.

Jonathan and Emily are in the U.S. for itineration until July 2016. Send an email to [jonathan.seitz@pcusa.org](mailto:jonathan.seitz@pcusa.org) to invite him to speak in your congregation or organization.

**Support Jonathan and Emily in Taiwan.**

[pcusa.org/donate/E200383](http://pcusa.org/donate/E200383)



Kathy Melvin

Eric O. Ledermann

## God's mission in Central America

*Bridging people and cultures*

**Leslie Vogel**, a facilitator with the Intercultural Encounters Program of the Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America (CEDEPCA), is part of a team that receives visiting groups, plans and facilitates their educational program and itinerary, and interprets and leads reflection discussions.

North American church groups, theological seminarians, and college/university students who visit Guatemala hosted by CEDEPCA are seeking to strengthen dialogue and cooperation among people, churches and communities of various countries and cultures. They engage in mutual prayer and learning, and unite with efforts to create societies that are peaceful, inclusive, equitable and just.

"My call to serve as a bridge between people and cultures continues to challenge and nurture my soul," Leslie says. "I particularly love learning about and introducing groups to the work CEDEPCA does in addressing the root causes of poverty and violence by providing transformative education for women and men all over Guatemala."

Leslie finds her call best expressed in Micah 6:8, by the Hebrew prophet's question: "What does God require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

Leslie received Whitworth University's 2015 Alumni Mind and Heart Award in recognition of her dedication to honor God, follow Christ and serve humanity through a life of Christian service.

**Support Leslie in Guatemala.**

[pcusa.org/donate/E200483](http://pcusa.org/donate/E200483)



## God's mission in Europe

*Finding strength and hope in diversity*

**Burkhard Paetzold**, PC(USA)

regional liaison for Central and Eastern Europe, devotes a major portion of his work to connecting Presbyterians in the U.S. interested in Roma ministry with partner churches in Europe. Burkhard supports mission co-workers, church leaders and global partners as they work to nurture the dignity and hope of the Roma people.

"It is a joy to work alongside Roma people in congregations and society as these long-discriminated-against children of God use their skills to improve their economic well-being," Burkhard says. "I am committed to encouraging Roma and non-Roma to accept one another and address diversity together."

"We try to support a holistic approach: social services, infrastructure programs, preschool education, housing, job creation, church leadership training, youth summer camps, youth exchange programs, multicultural learning and advocacy."

In his current role, Burkhard helps PC(USA) churches in the U.S. and churches in Europe build strong ministry partnerships to nurture mutual learning about Christian perspectives on justice, peace and the integrity of God's creation. At this time, this includes sharing approaches related to the global refugee crisis.

"This is a critical moment in the history of Europe and our witness as a church is needed," Burkhard says. "Will we have the long breath that is needed? Will hope and openness reign over fear?"

**Support Burkhard in Europe.**

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Kathy Melvin



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Embangweni school for deaf children,  
Embangweni, Malawi  
Photo by Jesse Dimmock

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