

Health & Development News

PC(USA) International Health Ministries

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IHM Staff

888-728-7228

Bob Ellis,

Coordinator

Ext. 5275

JoAnn Saunders,

Program Assistant,

Finance

Ext. 5276

Gail Bingham,

Associate for

Constituency Relations

Ext. 5573

Joy Raatz,

HIV/AIDS Initiative

Facilitator Ext. 5415

Toni Roppel,

Administrative Assistant

Ext. 5279

Caryl Weinberg,

Missionary in Residence

Ext. 5960

IHM Website:

www.pcusa.org/health/international

IHM Builds Partnership with Russia & Belarus

In communities of the former Soviet Union, Christian ministries are helping men and women who struggle with HIV/AIDS, alcoholism and drug addiction. Healing and hope are replacing despair and isolation in a variety of programs supported by PCUSA's new partner, the Belarus and Russian Orthodox Church Roundtables. In September, IHM Coordinator Bob Ellis made the first official visit on behalf of a PCUSA program office to the Round Tables' leadership and several of its ministries.

Bob's extensive two-week travels in Russia and Belarus were accompanied by Ellen Smith, who, along with her husband Alan, coordinates the Congregational Twinning Project, a program that pairs U.S. congregations with congregations in Russia and Belarus to build spiritual connections. The trip was planned to learn about the work of the two Round Tables in drug rehabilitation and HIV/AIDS.

(Continued on Pg. 3)

HIV/AIDS Field Staff Meets to Hone Strategy For Greater Impact

How PCUSA can best help our partners in Africa address the complex challenges of the AIDS pandemic was the focus of a three-day meeting in Louisville in September, which brought together mission co-workers based in six African nations and members of the U.S.-based AIDS Core Team.

The purpose of the meeting was to update the strategic plan for staff involvement in HIV/AIDS ministries, based on priority needs, the specific skill sets of mission personnel and the capacity of our church partners. *(Continued on Pg. 3.)*



A long-anticipated visit by PCUSA representatives to the Lyubcha Christian rehabilitation center in Belarus. Igor Romanovski, director, holds his daughter. Around him are Ellen Smith, Bob Ellis (3rd from left), a local police officer (in uniform), and three of the center's residents.

Missionary Funding Needed to Support Call to Health Service

Financial support to build and maintain PCUSA's missionary force is essential if the church is to continue its tradition of ministry to the world's neediest people. Three prospective mission co-workers in health ministries have been unable to progress toward placement in

the field due to lack of funding.

Denise England, a nurse, has already completed orientation to serve in Egypt with the Synod of the Nile, as a consultant to the American Mission Hospital at Tanta, the Cairo Medical Center and the Cairo Geriatric

Center. Brett Fawcett and his wife Shelley, have been recruited for the position of Health and HIV/AIDS Consultant for Asia.

Given PCUSA's current funding situation, it is necessary to obtain commitments for three years of funding before the General Assembly Council will appoint new positions. This is to ensure that mission personnel do not have to be brought back from the field prior to the end of their term of service due to financial reasons.

Financial gifts to fund missionary service can be directed to ECO account #132191. For more information, call Wes Wilkenson at 1-888-728-7228, ext. 5349, or Peter Kemerle at ext. 5612.

Haiti's Holy Cross Hospital in Critical Condition

A significant meeting of the Advisory Board of Holy Cross Hospital in Haiti will be held in Port au Prince in early November. Bob Ellis will attend as a member of the Advisory Board, along with PCUSA Haiti Partnership Facilitator Pix Mahler. The Advisory Board is led by Rev. Jacque Duracin, the Episcopal Bishop of Haiti. PCUSA has partnered with the Episcopal Diocese for many years in support of Holy Cross Hospital

and other health ministries in Haiti.

The security situation in Haiti has improved, allowing for the return of PCUSA mission co-workers and the resumption of work trips by experienced mission teams. However, Holy Cross hospital continues to struggle with issues of management competency and financial accountability.

PCUSA To Launch New Anti-Malaria Campaign in Sub-Saharan Africa

An overture calling for action to reduce the scourge of malaria in sub-Saharan Africa is moving toward implementation, following a meeting between the overture's sponsors and IHM

staff. Bob Ellis, coordinator of IHM, and Gail Bingham who manages the U.S. activities of the NetWorkers Malaria Prevention Program, met in mid-

October in Watertown, NY with representatives of the Presbytery of Northern New York. The group laid out a work plan for implementation of the malaria overture.

The overture calls for creation of a special committee tasked with devel-

oping a workable plan for a large-scale multi-organizational effort to reduce the impact of malaria. Joan Gray, moderator of the 217th General Assembly, will appoint members of the committee.

The overture also mandated the establishment of an Extra Commitment Opportunity Account to fund the work of the special committee. To support this effort, gifts may be directed to ECO 053503 and sent to: PCUSA Church Remittance Processing, P. O. Box 643678, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3678, OR PCUSA Individual Remittance Processing, P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700.



Expectant mothers learn about using a mosquito net at a malaria prevention program in Malawi. (D.B. Lee)

Christian Caring Demonstrated in Russia and Belarus

(Con't. from Pg. 1)

Alcoholism and drug abuse have become rampant in Russia and Belarus, and the rate of new HIV infection is the highest in the world. Resources for prevention, treatment and counseling are scarce. Following Bob's trip, IHM made several program grants to help fund basic and essential needs of three of the projects.

The only Christian rehab center for women in Belarus is run by an Orthodox nun, Sister Pavla, in Gomel. Her work is especially difficult, since, according to Ellen Smith, women in Belarus face greater challenges than men in breaking the cycle of addiction. Among the therapies she uses, Sister Pavla teaches women to care for animals in an effort to develop the women's nurturing instincts.

She hopes to expand her program at a farm she has acquired nearby, and plans to develop income-generating activities to make the farm self-

supporting. IHM will provide \$1,000 for a sewing machine and a camera and printer for the women to create greeting cards to sell.

A second program visited in Belarus was a rehabilitation center for men in the village of Lyubcha, where Igor Ro-



The new church built by rehab center residents in Lyubcha, one of many communities in Belarus where long-suppressed Christian worship is burgeoning. (B. Ellis)

manovski and his young family live with recovering addicts. The men have built a church, and forged a working relationship with the local police, thus strengthening the community's acceptance of the rehab center. They have built a barn and be-

-gun a dairy operation. A grant of \$2,000 will be sent to this program, to purchase two cows for breeding stock.

In Russia, Bob traveled ten hours by car and then motorboat on the Volga River to an isolated monastery in an abandoned village in the Ivanovo Region. There, Father Me-fodii and three monks guide men through a rehabilitation program that includes counseling, self-help groups, farm work and worship. Besides physical and emotional healing, Ellen Smith says the program works to move people from "nominal Christianity to real, life-giving faith."

A basic need of the rehab center is a reliable heating system to help preserve the fragile health of the residents, many of whom are HIV positive and have Hepatitis C. International Health Ministries will provide \$5,000 for a boiler and related building improve-

WORLD AIDS DAY IS DEC.

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See www.pcusa.org/aids-

Africa Field Staff Confers on AIDS Initiatives

PCUSA's HIV/AIDS work with our African partners will be focused in four areas:

- Prevention/behavior change
- Care of vulnerable children
- Gender issues / empowerment of women
- Poverty reduction

Programs facilitated by PCUSA will concentrate on

factors that contribute to HIV infection, such lack of knowledge, harmful cultural practices and desperate poverty.

The Africa field staff is working with the U.S.-based AIDS Core Team to develop tangible ways for U.S. Presbyterians to be involved in AIDS initiatives.

PCUSA Mission Co-Workers

engaged in HIV/AIDS initiatives in Africa are: Regional Health Consultants Frank Dimmock (Malawi) and Larry Sthreshley (D.R. Congo); Regional HIV/AIDS Consultants Janet Guyer (South Africa) and Dorothy Hanson, (Ethiopia); Health Consultant to the Presbyterian Church of Cameroon Shirley Hill, and Dr. Salvador de la Torre (Kenya).

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International Health Ministries
Presbyterian Church (USA)
100 Witherspoon St.
Louisville, KY 40202-1396

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News From Our Missionaries...



Rodney and Sharyn Babe

Rodney and Sharyn Babe have returned to Haiti, where they have worked for 15 years with the CODEP agricultural project in the L'Acoul area. They are now on the faculty of the Episcopal University in Port au Prince, where Rodney teaches agricultural courses and Sharyn is an instructor in communications technology.

Frank and Nancy Dimmock and their children are living at Mission Haven in Decatur, GA, while on home furlough. They have a busy schedule of mission interpretation visits to many congregations. The Dimmocks will return to Africa in June, when Frank will

resume work as a regional health consultant. The family will relocate to Lesotho from their previous home in Malawi.

Jim and Jodi McGill and family will be moving to Mission Haven in mid-November. The McGills will be on a mid-term break until Jan. 11, 2007, and then return to Malawi where Jim works with water projects for the Synod of Livingstonia's Development Department, and Jodi is a nurse/educator at Ekwendeni Hospital.

Caryl Weinberg, who has been a Missionary in Residence in Louisville for the past year, will move to the Chicago area in December to work as Director of Mission for her home church, First Presbyterian of Evanston. She will continue to help IHM plan several Training for Health workshop in Ethiopia, where Caryl has served on the mission field.



The McGill family has grown since this photo, with the addition of a second set of twins, John and Joseph