

# TRAINING LEADERS FOR COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

## *Campaign Overview*

God calls us to share our stories of faith. As part of World Mission's call to address evangelism around the world, we invite individuals and congregations to consider engaging more deeply in the work of international evangelism: sharing the good news of God's love in Jesus Christ.

One of the most effective ways to grow the Church around the globe is to train local leaders to address the specific challenges they face in their own communities, whether it is hunger, a natural disaster, injustice or persecution. Our global partners have challenged US Presbyterians to help equip their leaders to become agents of transformation—not with imported “cookie cutter” solutions, but with training that enables leaders to reflect theologically and to lead their community towards local solutions. This movement, “Train Leaders for Community Transformation,” focuses on holistic leader training that can lead to life-changing solutions for the world God so loves.

Examples include:

- i) Equipping pastors and church leaders with sound reformed theological education that empowers them to address pressing local needs and challenges.
- ii) Leader training that combines theological education with the development of practical skills such as agricultural development, literacy training, health, conflict resolution, teaching, and peace-building.
- iii) Leaders trained in Community Health Evangelism to address the overall health of the community—basic health, hygiene, food security and respect for human rights, all while sharing the Good News of the Gospel.

These are some of the ways Presbyterian Mission Co-Workers are joining the global Church in Training Leaders for Community Transformation:

### ***1) Manuel Soren in Bangladesh (Les and Cindy Morgan)***

Born into a poor Christian family, Manuel Soren grew up in the small Shantal tribal village of Paitapukur in northwest Bangladesh. Sensing Manuel's zeal to serve God, his pastor recommended him for admission to St. Andrews Theological College in Dhaka, which trains all clergy and lay leaders in the Church of Bangladesh, a PCUSA partner Church. Our PCUSA mission co-worker Dr. Les Morgan, who was Manuel's professor at St. Andrews, recalls, Manuel was a faithful, bright student who was deeply dedicated to Christian ministry. After Manuel completed a diploma in social ministry, the Church of Bangladesh chose him to be part of a team to share the gospel among other tribal people living in rural villages near his home. Through his ministry, several families in the village of Hudrapur came to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. Now a husband



and new father, Manuel is serving as the resident catechist in a small village called Tatihati. He sits with the new believers on a woven straw mat spread on the dirt floor of a bamboo hut to lead them in worship. Noticing illiteracy is a big problem in this poor village, Manuel and his wife also started to teach them to read by using the Bible. These landless families, who work as day laborers in the surrounding rice fields, are growing in the understanding of their new faith and their devotion to God. And the Church of Bangladesh is growing in numbers and spiritual depth as a result of the faith and dedication of young men like Manuel.

## ***2) Lahu Bible College in Thailand (Barry and Shelly Dawson)***



Lahu Bible College is located in Chiang Mai, Thailand and a ministry supported by our PCUSA partner, Church of Christ in Thailand. During my recent visit, I had a chance to meet with the school's representative Mr. Martin Chairuriya. He mentioned that since 2003, Lahu Bible College has produced more than 100 graduates. All of their students come from a minority hill tribe called Lahu. After completing the program, most of the graduates went back to serve their communities in Lahu villages. In addition to theological education, Lahu Bible College has a sizable piece of land that they have developed to support students and their families. They teach students practical skills in agriculture, fish-farming, gardening, pig and chicken farming, and basket weaving. In doing so, they have helped students become self-sustainable during and after their study. Our brothers and sisters at Lahu Bible College are committed to teach and train new leaders so that they can holistically share the gospel to tribal villages scattered in remote areas of Thailand and neighboring countries.



## ***3) John McCall in Taiwan***

Hsin Ren and his wife Fong-joon were both students at Taiwan Seminary in the capital city, Taipei. Hsin-ren received his Master of Divinity degree and Fong-joon studied in its Lay Academy. They both have a passion for Youth Ministry and expected to be called to a big city church to work on staff specifically with youth. Instead they were called to a rural church in a farming community. On their first Sunday at that church there were only eight elderly folks in worship. Their hearts sank, but then they began to pray for the families, children, and youth of that

community. They visited the schools and got to know the teachers and principals. They walked the streets of their new town introducing themselves to parents and children. With the blessing of the eight elderly folks at church, they opened the doors of the church after school as a place where children could come and get help with their homework. They offered music classes and began a praise band. And the children and youth started to come. They took the youth on trips to see places they had only heard of. When our mission co-worker John McCall, who was Hsin-Ren and Fong-Joon's professor, preached there over a weekend renewal service, this church, which was on life-support, was full of about 50 children and youth. Word got around the neighborhood and non-Christian parents, who previously opposed their children going to church, now saw that the church was vital in changing their children into good students, helpful sons and daughters, and all-around good people. John stopped to get a key made at a small hardware store in that town. The owner asked him why he was visiting, for few Westerners come to their town. John told him that he was speaking at the Presbyterian Church. The owner said, "We love what Hsin-ren and Fong-Joon have done for our three children". When John asked him if he was a Christian, he said, "No, but we sure see a change in our children." As John sat on the front pew waiting to preach, there were two young boys on either side of him. Later he learned that they were brothers living with their grandmother. Their parents were divorced and unable to take care of them. The grandmother did not have much energy to supervise her grandchildren, and the older boy was caught stealing another student's cell phone at school. The social worker called the grandmother in and told her that she had two choices: one was to call the police and let them deal with the boy or she could send her grandson to the Presbyterian Church. The social worker, who is not a Christian, saw how community children were being changed by God at the Presbyterian Church. Two of the high school boys who had recently confessed their faith in Christ were getting ready to take their college entrance exam. The principal of the High School accompanies the seniors before their exam each year to the Folk Temple to make offerings to the folk gods so they will help the students on their exam. These two new Christians told their principal that they did not want to go to the temple, but instead invited their principal to come to their church where Pastor Hsin-ren led a prayer service for them. It is thrilling to see these servant leaders move to a new town and make such a significant difference in the families, schools, and in the whole community. They know why they are there, to be Christ's salt and light. They know that the Holy Spirit can change that community.

#### ***4) Chasefu Theological College (Kari Nicewander)***

Unlike the U.S., the shortage of trained pastoral leaders has become one of the most critical issues for our mission partners in many non-Western countries. For example, the ratio of a pastor to congregants in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Malawi is about 1 to 7,000. During my recent travel to Zambia, I and some of our World Mission staff had an opportunity to visit a rural theological college called Chasefu, which is under the Church of Central Africa Zambia Synod. Located in the eastern part of Zambia, Chasefu was



literally built “in the bush” with few resources. The college has a good sized piece of land which it wants to develop agriculturally to support the school, provide training to the pastors so that they gain the skills to assist the communities they serve in improving food security and to serve as a demonstration farm for local farmers to see the benefits of creative approaches to agriculture. Pastors will also come out with skills that can help to support themselves in ministry. CCAP hopes to expand the theological college to offer courses in education, agriculture, and nursing. We hope to see more theological institutions such as Chasefu which addresses both physical and spiritual needs of our global partners thus being holistic! “When Naomi Daka was a child, there were no female pastors in her denomination. But the church was where she found joy, experienced God, and sang songs of praise to God. She wanted to serve the Lord with all her heart, so when the CCAP Synod of Zambia began to ordain women, Naomi followed her call into ministry. After completing her secondary education – an important accomplishment in Zambia, where 65 percent of girls are not enrolled in secondary school – Naomi registered at Chasefu Theological College, very far from her home in Lusaka. At Chasefu, the first group of theological students slept on a cement floor of an old building and shared one classroom with a local mission school. They grew their own food, and when the harvest was poor, they simply went hungry. Through it all, they continued to learn about God, sing songs of praise, and study for ministry. PCUSA mission co-worker Kari Nicewander says that she was blessed to preach at the ordination ceremony for Naomi and her graduating class. They had studied in an environment far more challenging than her own seminary experience. Watching Naomi graduate, she was filled with admiration. What amazing commitment to God’s ministry! This young woman, the only woman in her class, followed God’s call from Lusaka to Chasefu, and she will continue to follow, wherever God leads.

### ***5) Mark Hare / Jenny Bent (the Dominican Republic)***

Mark Hare and his wife Jenny, PCUSA mission co-workers who work in the Dominican



Republic, returned to their house in Barahona after finishing two and a half days of workshop with the CHE volunteers from Batey 7, a sugarcane workers’ town with mostly people of Haitian descendants. Mark and Jenny’s ministry is part of the health program that the Dominican Evangelical Church (IED) partner is developing. Since the middle of 2012, they have been working in Batey 7 using the CHE strategy, which integrates all of the elements that affect a person including spiritual, emotional, physical and social needs. It is geared toward the renewal of the

intimate relationship of each person with God, with themselves, with their neighbor and with their environment. When they arrived home, they were exhausted, but they hearts were full as they were looking at many papers covered with prayers, scripture verses, and testimonies presented by those youth involved in the CHE workshop. They were overwhelmed by the abundance of knowledge that the CHE volunteers shared with them. During the two and a half days of the workshop Mark and Jenny were responsible for 13 young people between the ages of 13 and 19. They exchanged laughs, played games together, and also discovered many gifts each brought to the table. Leo and Maria Luisa

learned to use the Bible for the first time Jose prayed for the first time. It was everyone's first time to write a Biblically-based lesson. In this workshop Mark and Jenny had ten subjects that the Community Development Committee has selected as being the most important for Batey 7. The youth had opportunities to develop a lesson for one of the subjects by drawing upon biblical texts and their personal faith journey. They also prepared prayers and greetings that they will use as they enter into their neighbors' houses. Then, the youth role-played the visits they will make in Batey 7 and they gave helpful feedback to each other. The amazing part about this creative practice was that it came from the youth themselves and they were all learning together! At the end of the workshop, there was an Agape Celebration. Mark and Jenny shared the sweet bread and the hot chocolate as a symbol of love and unity. And in light of Matthew 10:5-9, the couple asked the youth whether they were willing to respond to the challenge that Jesus presents to them, the challenge to take their knowledge and gifts to their neighbors in order to transform their community. The youth responded with a resounding "Yes". They also asked the youth if they truly believe that what they have within them is worth much more than silver and gold. Again, they responded, "Yes". Everything that Mark and Jenny thought would be difficult, or nearly impossible, seems to be becoming reality. Jenny and Mark invite us to reflect with them on the passage from Matthew 10 that they shared with the youth. How often have we believed that wealth and material goods simply resolve poverty and afflictions? How often have we come into a community like Batey 7 and told them what is best for them? Stop for a moment and listen to our brothers and sisters in the local community. They have all the wisdom from their community to create a new reality.

Presbyterian World Mission wants to engage US Presbyterians to work with our global partners in these ways, supporting them as they work to train and equip their pastors to be agents of transformation in their communities.

### **What can you do?**

You can contact Juan Sarmiento, International Evangelism Catalyst, at 502-569-5262 or [juan.sarmiento@pcusa.org](mailto:juan.sarmiento@pcusa.org) and get involved! Juan will have ideas for what you can do to help tell the world about the saving love of Christ, and how you can help us promote this initiative around the world.

### **Ten other practical things:**

1. Request a free copy of the winter 2014 issue of *Mission Crossroads* magazine to find out more about how our global partners are developing leaders that model and practice holistic evangelism. Contact Nicole Gerkins at 502-569-5611 or [nicole.gerkins@pcusa.org](mailto:nicole.gerkins@pcusa.org).
2. Become involved in the life-changing ministry of Chusefu Theological College in Zambia that combines theological formation with skills training. Visit [vimeo.com/60156642](https://vimeo.com/60156642) to watch a 20-minute video.
3. Become acquainted with the Community Health Evangelism (CHE) network ([chenetwork.org](http://chenetwork.org)). This training strategy is being used in more than 112 countries to lead people to Christ, lifting communities out of cycles of poverty and planting

churches. Close to 25 Presbyterian mission co-workers have gone through the “Training of Trainers” workshops.

4. Invite a mission co-worker to speak at your congregation about the ways they are using CHE among economically impoverished communities around the world. Contact Rachel Anderson, Program Assistant for Itineration Support, at 502-569-5826 or [rachel.anderson@pcusa.org](mailto:rachel.anderson@pcusa.org), or visit [presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/find-mission-speaker](http://presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/find-mission-speaker) for more information.
5. Pray for and support the ministry of mission co-worker Mark Wright training pastors for community transformation with the Presbyterian Church of Honduras: [presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/wright-mark-and-ashley](http://presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/wright-mark-and-ashley).
6. Participate in the next gathering of one of the mission networks serving with global partners in parts of the world where they are emphasizing holistic evangelism such as Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Ethiopia, Congo, Madagascar, Sudan and Guatemala. For information on dates and locations, contact Patrick Alyea at 502-569-5284 or [patrick.alyea@pcusa.org](mailto:patrick.alyea@pcusa.org).
7. Support John McCall’s work through the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan. McCall serves the growing population of urban aboriginal people who have left their villages for jobs in the cities: [presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/mccall-john](http://presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/mccall-john).
8. Read “Building a People of Power” by Presbyterian minister Robert Linthicum, which explores how congregations can exercise power in Godly ways so that God's kingdom can be built in their communities. If possible, lead a study about the book at your church.
9. Partner with mission co-workers Bob and Kristi Rice’s work with the Presbyterian Community of Congo. They serve with the Presbyterian Community of Congo by witnessing to the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed alongside more than 700 parishes in the Kasai region: [presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/rice-bob-and-kristi](http://presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/rice-bob-and-kristi).
10. Contribute financially towards books, curriculum development and scholarships among the theological institutions participating in the campaign (see list below) by visiting [presbyterianmission.org/donate/make-a-gift](http://presbyterianmission.org/donate/make-a-gift) and entering D500102 for congregations and E200102 for individuals in the search box after clicking the “change it here” link.

Some other theological institutions participating in the campaign are:

- Zomba Theological College - Malawi
- Latin American Bible University- Costa Rica
- Nile Theological College - Sudan
- Evangelical Seminary - Egypt
- Lahu Bible College - Thailand
- Silliman University - Philippines

- Oxford School of Mission Studies - UK
- Bethlehem Bible College - Palestine
- Seminario Evangelico de Matanzas - Cuba
- Universidad Reformada – Colombia
- Near East School of Theology- Lebanon
- ESEPA - Dominican Republic
- Akrofi-Christaller Institute - Ghana
- Sulliman University - Philippines
- Ivato Seminary - Madagascar
- CEDEPCA - Guatemala

### About Juan Sarmiento

*An ordained minister, Sarmiento has been active in many roles in the PC(USA). In the Presbytery of San Fernando, he served as a member of the Evangelism and Church Growth committee and moderator of the presbytery. He also co-chaired a committee of the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, was a commissioner to the 216th General Assembly, a member of the Reforming Ministry initiative (Office of Theology and Worship) and assessor with the New Beginnings program with the Office of Evangelism and Church Growth. Sarmiento helped launch the first evangelical organization to serve the needs of the HIV-positive community in Brazil, was an organizer for the Hollywood-Wilshire cluster of Presbyterian churches in Los Angeles, assisted new immigrants through founding a non-profit organization in the San Fernando Valley, served the homeless as part of the ministry team of the Los Angeles Mission and facilitated the formation of a health/faith partnership in South Los Angeles. Born in Venezuela, Sarmiento is a graduate of San Francisco Theological Seminary and has done doctoral studies at Columbia Theological Seminary as well as advanced studies in linguistics at California State University-Los Angeles and Islamic studies at the Fuller School of Intercultural Studies. He has served as a leader for English-, Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking congregations.*

