

# APRIL 2009



## **Amanda Craft: New PCUSA Mission Co-Worker in Guatemala.**

Amanda was appointed in January 2009 to serve in Guatemala in the area of women's leadership development (the position that Ellen Dozier previously held). Amanda works primarily with "sinodicas," the name given to organizations of Presbyterian women in the church. While Amanda serves as advisor to the sinodicas of all the presbyteries, her primary focus is on leadership development and Christian education. This is not Amanda's first appointment by the PCUSA to serve in Guatemala. She was a Young Adult Volunteer in Guatemala from 1999 to 2000. Amanda has spent most of her working life serving the PCUSA. Prior to her appointment to Guatemala, Amanda served for eight years on the national staff of the General Assembly Council as associate for education and advocacy of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program. In that position, she worked largely with young adults, but also had responsibilities for interpreting the work of the church in peacemaking and interpreting the issues the church addressed in this area. Amanda served as a young adult intern in the International Volunteers office in 2000-2001. She is married to Omar Alexander Chan Giron and they are expecting their first child. Birthdays: Amanda (March 6) & Omar (February 5). For more information go to [www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/profiles/crafta.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/profiles/crafta.htm). And her number is E200334.

## **Barbara Nagy's New Car!**





## February 19<sup>th</sup> Letter from Becca Young, PCUSA Mission Co-Worker in Indonesia

Dear Friends,

There's a story from my childhood that comes up every once in awhile during family gatherings. I was about 6 when it happened. A friend of my mother's was talking about a recent purchase she had made that really pleased her. "I love it," she said. With all the self-assuredness that a 6-year-old can evoke, I attempted to correct her by proclaiming, "You can't love things, you can only love people!"

If we had only been in Indonesia at the time, I would have avoided embarrassing my mother's friend as well as my mother. The Indonesian language reserves the word "love" for people, and it is replete with ways of saying it: *cinta*, *kasih*, and *sayang* are applied exclusively to relationships between people and to the connection between human beings and God. There's another word, *suka*, that is used when one speaks of appreciation for non-living things.

It's not that surprising that they have so many words for love, because the Indonesians love love. To adhere to the standards I set as a 6-year-old, I guess I should say they "suka cinta." When they strike up a conversation with you, they have no interest in talking about the weather, or sports, or where you work, or where you live. They want to know how much love you have in your life.

So first they ask if you are married, for they firmly believe that everyone has a soulmate, a *Jodoh*. To meet your life partner, whether by matchmaking or on your own, is to be "soulmated," *dijodohkan*. In fact, in responding to the question of whether you are married or not, you simply cannot use the word "no." It makes no sense from their point of view, because everyone will eventually meet their *Jodoh* and be married. So the only suitable answer to the question besides "yes" is a hopeful "not yet."

There is always ongoing concern for those who are still in the "not yet" category. Recently I was asking the students in my conversational English class to answer that classic query, "What I did on my vacation," this time in reference to their Christmas holiday.

When I opened up the discussion for them to ask questions of each other, they always posed the same question for the singles in the group: not what presents they got for Christmas (Indonesians don't exchange Christmas gifts) but whether they spent time with their beloved over the holidays. If the person grinned shyly and whispered, "Yes," it was met with applause and shouts of joy. The next question was inevitably, "And then? So?" as everyone was eager to know if future plans had been made. If the respondent grew even shyer, blushed more deeply and whispered even more softly, "Yes," then the applause and shouts of joy escalated accordingly.

The next topic of conversation for Indonesians is always in regard to how many children one has, for every child born into a family is a blessing that multiplies the amount of love that abounds. They treasure children and treat them with great respect and love from the moment they are born, girls and boys alike. They don't shower them with material goods—Indonesian children don't play on their own with toys like Western children do.

Instead, from the beginning the child is an integral part of the family group and its various activities, always held on someone's hip (neither cribs nor strollers are a recognizable concept in this culture) or passed from one loving embrace to another. In fact, in Balinese culture the children are not allowed to touch the ground for the first six months of their lives. It is believed that they have just arrived from heaven and are to be cherished and protected. There is a ceremony at the age of six months for their first encounter with the earth, as described by a visitor to Bali:

“Then the whole family gathered by the baby, everyone seeming to hold her at the same time and—*oops! there goes!*—they lightly dipped the baby’s feet in this pottery bowl full of holy water, right above the magic drawing which encompassed the whole universe, and then they touched her soles to the earth for the first time. When they lifted her back up into the air, tiny damp footprints remained on the ground below her, orienting this child at last onto the great Balinese grid, establishing who she was by establishing *where* she was. Everyone clapped their hands, delighted. The little girl was one of us now. A human being—with all the risks and thrills which that perplexing incarnation entails.”- Elizabeth Gilbert, *Eat Pray Love*

Such is the love and care with which Indonesians surround their children. But their elders also rank highly in esteem, and the third question commonly asked by Indonesians concerns one’s parents and their health and well-being. So ordinary conversation between Indonesians covers the three generations, establishing who they are by their context within a network of intergenerational love.



**Manda Saroinsong, seminary student, poses in front of a board announcing the seminary's Valentine events, Jakarta, Feb 19, 2009.**

Considering how important love is to Indonesians, it is not surprising to find that they have embraced Valentine’s Day as an informal national celebration. On the Jakarta Theological Seminary campus, our students arranged a number of events around February 14, including a chocolate cooking competition, a couple’s treasure hunt on the campus grounds, and several worship services focused on love, including a Taizé service in the evening romantically illuminated by candlelight. One of my students from last semester, Sergio, requested that I surprise his new girlfriend, Siro, who is in my theology class this semester, by giving her a Valentine’s card from him during class. I managed to surprise her and the whole class as Sergio himself appeared, to whoops of delight from Siro’s classmates.

A few days before Valentine’s Day, a female student, Yanti, asked if she could interview me for the weekly student newspaper. The topic of the newspaper that week was of course, love. She asked me first what I thought of love and how I would define it. Then she switched to a more personal area, asking me about my past love life and what experience I had had of love. I panicked because the last thing I wanted to do was to talk about such things in front of my students. But then I realized I was being too self-conscious and imposing too narrow a definition on love.

I took a deep breath and let my thoughts go, to see where they might alight in response to the question, at what point in my life did I have a profound experience of love?

Almost immediately I knew. I remembered it. I nearly laughed with relief when I realized that I have not only had that profound experience once but many, many times over and can look forward to having many more, and I have no reason to be embarrassed about it.

For my most intense feeling of love comes when I as an ordained pastor have the incredible privilege of standing in the midst of a congregation and distributing the elements of bread and wine. In that amazingly romantic moment, I am able to experience who I am by establishing where I am, touching the ground at precisely the place where the greatest love affair of all time occurs: where God meets human beings, in the gift of Jesus’ body and blood, and in the gathering of all God’s people at one table for no other reason than for love. I am caught up in that love, overwhelmed by the realization of my identity as a member of the beloved family of God.



**Siro Siboro and Sergio Souisa enjoy each other's company during a break between classes, seminary campus, Jakarta, Feb 19, 2009.**

The Indonesians have gotten it right—we are who we love and whom we are loved by. And we as precious children are loved by God, carried on God's hip from the moment of our birth, and included in all God's activities. What could be more romantic than that?

Happy Valentine's Day!

Becca

To see more of Becca's letters go to [www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/profiles/youngr.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/profiles/youngr.htm)

## LETTER FROM DON AND CHARLENE WOODS



Dear Friends,

We thank God for you and for your many acts of kindness towards us. As you may know Don and Charlene leave for Hong Kong and Mongolia March 30, with a mission team joining us on April 7. This is our eleventh year in the Gobi.

This year's team members include the Rev. James Biggers [USA], the Rev. Maik Friedrich [Germany], Mr. John Harrison [UK], Ms. Carol Lee [Hong Kong], and Ms. N. Tumendelger [Mongolia]. This time we will be in

Ulaanbaatar and Sainshand, East Gobi, the latter a rather important mission field and one where the church is just beginning to grow after quite a few years of missions effort.

One very recent and rather urgent request from our Korean missionary friends is to help provide simple meals to some 200 homeless street children who have little to eat, and few (if any) warm clothes to wear. They are hungry and they are very cold!

So we hope to help some here in addition to our other work in the Gobi -- thanks to your personal sacrifice and faithfulness, and that of local churches and Samaritan's Purse.

In addition, several doctors are providing special vitamins to help children and seniors who are suffering from malnutrition in the Gobi region. One such lad from a mission church .... and the cute "little rascal"...came right up to the camera! Because of one such little child Gobi Mission began 11 years ago.

Also the team will continue our on-going mission work and ministry to the Mongolian Gobi region. We very much appreciate your many prayers and kind support. These mission activities can be found on [www.gobimission.org](http://www.gobimission.org) as you have time to "take a peek".

We thank God for you, your friendship, your prayers and your support down through the years, and may He bless you in every way.

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Montreat, NC 28757 USA  
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## **PCUSA Monthly Hunger Fasts April 3-5 Sierre Leone/Liberia**

Were you aware that a number of denominational staff and divisions are participating in a once a month fast? That they are using this time to be in prayer for hungry places in this world, to seek spiritual discernment, and to learn about world conditions. You can join them and join with Presbyterians around the country in these monthly 40-hour fasts to help discern ways to respond to the Global Food Crisis. The fasts typically take place on the first weekend of every month, beginning on Friday evening and ending with Communion or a communal meal on Sunday. A different country and issue is highlighted each month and at the [www.pcusa.org/hunger](http://www.pcusa.org/hunger) website you can find prayers, liturgy, and fact sheets. April 3-5 will focus on Sierre Leone.



## **MANNA FOODBANK of WNC April Food Drive**

Manna FoodBank of Western North Carolina is having an April food drive and asking area churches to participate. The need for food has skyrocketed in the current economy. If your church, or a group within your church, would be interested in participating, contact Autumn McCarver (Food Drive Coordinator) at 828-299-3663 ext 245 or by email at [AMcCarver@FeedingAmerica.org](mailto:AMcCarver@FeedingAmerica.org). For more information you can also go to [www.mannafoodbank.org](http://www.mannafoodbank.org). It is more important to Manna FoodBank for churches to participate than for them to meet their original March 20 registration deadline, so when you see that date do not be discouraged.

The following is from a Manna FoodBank letter: "In the past year, the lives of so many of our Western North Carolina neighbors have been affected by the recession, job cuts, lost savings or worse. For the first time in our 26 year history, Manna FoodBanks partner agencies are seeing an influx of newly poor: working people who can no longer make ends meet during these challenging times."... "It's important to note that if the members of your faith community are currently and actively supporting food drive efforts with an agency feeding people in need, Manna Food Bank does not want your participation in MannaFest to supplant those efforts. If participation can be added to your food ministry without jeopardizing supplies currently going to another organization, we welcome your help."

## **MALAWI MAY 20-JUNE 1 TRIP SUPPLIES**

There will be nine people traveling to Malawi to visit Barbara Nagy, the Nkhoma Hospital, and the new school. The Ebenezer school has given us a list of what would be helpful for us to bring. We are waiting to hear what the hospital needs us to bring. If your church is interested in collecting any of the following, contact Grace Boyer in the Presbytery office 828-438-4217 [gboyer@presbyterywnc.org](mailto:gboyer@presbyterywnc.org).

### Things for the School:

Different textures of paper, thin foil, crepe paper etc, for diversity of crafts  
Colored construction paper  
Glitter to decorate  
Flash cards  
Large Alphabet letters to display on the walls  
Books with Alphabet and Number exercises  
Journal Books for Kindergarten age  
Book with craft ideas (that we can make copies of)  
Bible activity books for the 4/5 year old children  
Shapes and rollers to play with the play dough  
Different puzzles for this ages group  
Wooden beads with string to practice eye- hand coordination  
Plastic shovels,sifs,cars, buckets etc to play with in the sandpit  
Scissors for children (20)  
Dress up clothes,hats,high heels

## **LEGACY OF LOVE**

### **EBENEZER SCHOOL BUILDING FURNITURE**

First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia, as part of their Legacy of Love building campaign, raised the money to build the first school building in Nkhoma. (The Hospital was having difficulty retaining their staff because there was no place to send their children to school.) The building is finished, but we are now trying to pay for the furniture. Love's Chapel gave 5 chairs and 2 cubbies, and Mariella Provost provided a copier. Below is a list of furniture being built by a local carpenter in Malawi, but needs to be paid for. For more information contact Dorothy McKenzie (FPC Gastonia) 704-865-8170, [dotmckenz@aol.com](mailto:dotmckenz@aol.com). You can send money to the Presbytery office, specifying it is for furniture for the Ebenezer School in Malawi.

MK 1.000 = \$7 approximately

Automatic Voltage Regulator MK 15.000  
Teacher desks for each classroom MK 27.000 each  
Desk for Teachers room and administrator's desk MK 32.000  
Coffee table in teachers room MK 27.000  
3 teachers chairs MK 20.000 each  
4 Tables for students nursery class MK 9.000 each  
12 tables for students reception class MK 3.000 each  
40 chairs for students MK 1.200 each  
2 Floor mats for children to sit on during story time MK 25.000 each  
40 cubbies for backpacks and books MK 2.500 each  
6 unit shelves MK 13.000 each  
3 cupboards MK 20.000 each  
3 book shelves MK 18.000 each  
Play kitchen MK 4.000  
Crib for Doll MK 2.500  
Bench with lid to tidy play clothes MK 5.000  
Plastic table and two chairs (child size) MK 4.000



## PWNC Shower Trailer



## PWNC Shower trailer at Port Neches, Texas



### PCUSA Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Weeks

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is building upon the success of last year's "Father & Son" week, and adding a "Family week."

**Who:** June 14-20 Family Week; June 21-27 Father & Son Week

**What:** Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Relief work

**Where:** Olive Tree Presbyterian Volunteer village, New Orleans

**How:** Minimum age is 14 and the cost is \$20 per night per person (includes meals and lodging). Call 866-732-6121 to register or for more information. Also read about it at

[www.pcusa.org/pda/response/usa/gulfcoast/index-gulfcoast.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/pda/response/usa/gulfcoast/index-gulfcoast.htm).

At this site is also information about youth weeks.



## One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering is coming! The OGHS offering is a denomination wide offering that is usually received on Easter or Palm Sunday and is split between the Presbyterian Hunger Program, the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Program, and the Self Development of People Program. This year marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the offering that began as American Christians recognized the need to respond to the worldwide devastation caused by World War II. The theme is “Where is Your Treasure?” For

more information or to order materials go to [www.pcusa.org/oghs](http://www.pcusa.org/oghs).

## Wondering Where to Recycle your Compact Florescent Light Bulbs?

You can now drop off unbroken expired CFLs at NC Interfaith Power & Light’s Asheville office. Interfaith Power & Light is a program of the North Carolina Council of Churches. The Asheville office is located at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church; 30 Macon Avenue—Suite 4. Drop-Off Hours MTWF 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and Thursday 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Before you go, call 828-252-1794.

They are using Home Depot’s free recycling program:

[www6.homedepot.com/ecoptions/stage/pdf/cfl\\_recyle.pdf](http://www6.homedepot.com/ecoptions/stage/pdf/cfl_recyle.pdf).

Consider starting your own drop-off program at your Church using your local Home Depot. To find out what to do if a CFL breaks, visit

[www.energystar.gov/ia/partners/promotions/change\\_light/downloads/Fact\\_Sheet\\_Mercury.pdf](http://www.energystar.gov/ia/partners/promotions/change_light/downloads/Fact_Sheet_Mercury.pdf).

## Cell Our Cells and Raise Money for Barbara Nagy

You can raise money for Barbara Nagy by recycling old cell phones, ink jet cartridges, DVD movies and games, laptop/notebook computers, MP3 players, and digital cameras through Eco-Phones. How do you do it? When you have collected enough for a box, go to [www.ecophones.com](http://www.ecophones.com) and on the left side of the screen click on “Shipping.” The website will walk you through the process, but if you have any difficulty you can call them at 888-326-7466. When you click to make a mailing label, it will ask for your address (**put your own personal address in here**) and you can print off a free mailing label. Inside the box put a note saying to send the money to the Presbytery of Western North Carolina; 114 Silver Creek Road; Morganton, NC 28655; 828-438-4317. Call the number they have listed for Fed Ex and they will come to your house or church for free to pick up your box.

## UPCOMING CONFERENCES:

### “Embracing God’s Call to be Green”

**The Faith & the Environment Conference, July 7-11 at Montreat Conference Center.** This conference is sponsored by Presbyterians for Restoring Creation and Montreat Conference Center. For more information or to register, go to [www.montreat.org/current/2009-faith-and-environment](http://www.montreat.org/current/2009-faith-and-environment).



**Young Adult Ministries (YAM Jam) Conference May 27-30, 2009 at Austin Presbyterian Seminary.** YAM-Jam is an event for people seeking creative ways to be in ministry with young adults and college students in the PCUSA, and is sponsored by

PACHEM and the Office of Collegiate Ministries, PC(USA). Speakers include Carol Howard Merritt, Bruce Reyes-Chow, and Ted Wardlaw. The classic problem facing young adult ministry in the PCUSA is feeling isolated from the rest of the denomination. As our church adjusts to issues of culture and structural changes, YAM-Jam is a way to bring those who care about young adults together to share, learn, worship, and play. Visit [www.pachem.org/YAMJamConference/tabid/40218/Default.aspx](http://www.pachem.org/YAMJamConference/tabid/40218/Default.aspx) for conference information or to register online.



### **Big Tent Event!**

Do you know about the “**Big Tent Event**” **June 11-13 in Atlanta!**

“Experience 10 different PCUSA partner conferences, occurring

concurrently, with common time set aside for all participants to sample workshops conducted by partner groups, be in worship together, enjoy meals together and attend a transforming Saturday night celebration.” Conferences include: New Immigrants Ministries Convocation, National Multicultural Church Conference, National Elders Conference, CPM/COM/Seminary Healthy Ministry Conference, Racial Ethnic Convocation, Stewardship Conference, Communicators Network, Peacemaking Conference, PHEWA Social Justice Biennial conference, and Evangelism and Church Growth Conference. For more information go to [www.pcusa.org/bigtent](http://www.pcusa.org/bigtent). For a flyer go to [www.pcusa.org/multicultural/bigtent.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/multicultural/bigtent.pdf).