



# MISSION CONNECTIONS

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Fall 2021



## Leaning into Visions that Transform Individuals and Communities

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Advent greetings, family and friends!

As you may recall, I serve four countries: Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia. As I reflected on the Matthew 25 vision that PC(USA) has adopted, I wondered what passages our international partner congregations in my region endorse or what passages they may embrace as their visions. I wanted to know what passages they leaned into for their vision. I learned that their “patterns of Christian praxis in Church and Society” are validated in the ministries they govern to cultivate and nurture spiritual growth and encourage their members and the communities surrounding their churches.

They practice ministries that visit the sick and the prisoner, feed the hungry and clothe the naked. They practice the directives that Jesus Christ has given us even if they're not necessarily motivated directly from the Matthew passage that PC(USA) has adopted. This letter will focus on two of those partners.

Our partner here in Zambia, Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Synod of Zambia (CCAP Zambia), understands itself to be responding to “God’s work that lines up with the Matthew 25 passage.”

They have five foci:

- Caring for the people who are in need.
- Providing education to the vulnerable people in the communities surrounding the churches.
- Providing clean drinking water to the people who are in rural areas.
- Providing good health facilities to the people in rural areas.
- Providing better services to alleviate poverty.



Shallow well at CCAP Zambia’s Egichikeni Maternity Clinic, in Egichikeni, Lundazi District. Photo by Paula Cooper.

This partner’s heart is for the oppressed who experience inequalities and need justice to prevail in their lives. They have executed trainings for the Village Saving and Loan program. Many families cannot afford to pay the school fees required for children to attend government-sponsored schools, so the CCAP Zambia sponsors community schools that children can afford to attend. Providing education for these children, so they have an opportunity to grow into productive members of society is another way to alleviate poverty. Some of the schools offer a feeding program for the community’s children. CCAP Zambia has an Early Childhood Development program running in many church schools. They attempt to work with the schools to help young girls return to school to assist with decreasing gender-based violence. CCAP Zambia also visits the sick and the prisoner. Their partners work with them in providing shallow wells in the rural areas. CCAP trains and prepares young men and women for the ministry in Lundazi, Zambia, at Chasefu Theological College (CTC). At CTC emphasis is placed on theological courses and courses that address the root causes of poverty in rural congregations. Church vitality is key and can only be achieved through holistic education.

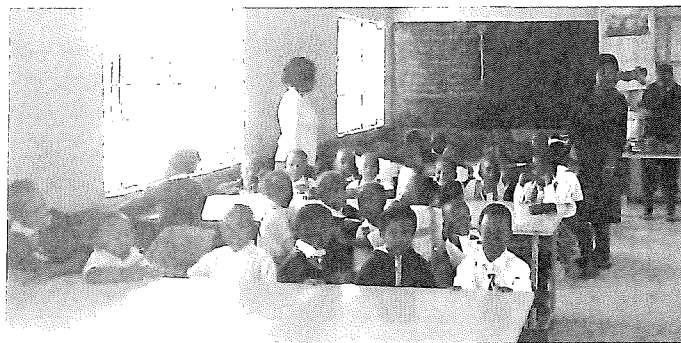
On the other hand, the vision of our partner, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Kenya (PCEA), comes from John 10:10, “The thief

comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” In Kenya, their ministries are about giving life and giving it more abundantly.

Their three foci are:

- Sharing the good news of abundant life in Christ through vibrant congregational worship, including commitment to prayer, fasting and sharing the sacrament.
- Addressing the root causes of poverty and deprivation especially by empowering women and children in areas of sustainability, agriculture, food security, access to education and access to clean water.
- Addressing the legacy of colonialism, especially through the theology and missiology of “Jitegemea,” which is a Kiswahili word meaning “movement toward self-reliance,” but the Jitegemea spirit is much more than that. It recognized the inherent worth and value of the Africa church, African leadership and African community. The PCEA recognizes the immense resources available in East Africa – human, financial and theological resources. PCEA also seeks to build relationships with partner churches that are based on mutuality, respect and shared mission.

The PCEA runs several boarding and vocational schools for girls and boys. One such home is for young girls threatened by early childhood marriages or female genital mutilation (FGM). Many young girls have run away from homes where the threat of being sold into marriage is extreme because, for their parents, it is the only way to survive. Many of these children have been rescued from the streets where they are forced to join gangs or enter into prostitution. Their philosophy is that “the value of education disrupts the cycle of poverty.” Since the pandemic, they implemented an Adopt-a-Family program. Their



Presbyterian Church of East Africa’s Githiga Children’s Boarding Home, in Githunguri, Kenya. Photo by Paula Cooper.

partners have assisted them with digging boreholes for several communities in rural areas to have clean water – “Maji ni maisha” means “water is life.” The PCEA recognizes that access to healthy water “increases hygiene standards, access to education and food security.”

In my next newsletter, I will feature two other partners.

Thank you for your continued support to these partners and the ministry that God has called us to! We are forever grateful for your prayers, engagements and financial contributions to our work!

May you and yours be blessed immeasurably during this Advent Season of the Expectation of the Second Coming of Christ!

Shalom,

Paula

*As we anticipate the coming of Jesus, the Christ, may our hearts and minds be transformed into the people He will be coming for!*

## ***Thank you for reading my letter!***

*Please consider supporting Presbyterian Mission through my ministry. I am grateful for your prayers, personal communication and financial support.*

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*Thank you for your faithful support.*