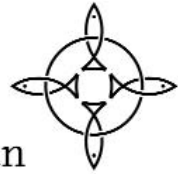


# VOICE

Fifth Avenue  
Presbyterian  
Church



## Lending a Helping Hand

By Naomi Kroeger and Mary Jane Potter



**Wendy Robinson** clears debris in Pearlington, MS as part of a recent FAPC mission trip to the Gulf Coast region.

*Photo: Deborra Mullins*

Presbyterians identify themselves as a “connectional” church, linked to a vast network of sister churches in the USA and worldwide. Taking the “Great Commission” seriously, Presbyterians go into all the world, proclaiming the Gospel and demonstrating the love of Christ by extending a hand to others, whether next door or around the globe.

It was love and dedication to mission that fueled a bus carrying the FAPC India mission trip team up a dusty track past the rusting towers of the abandoned Kolar Gold Fields. Their destination was the Shafer Tailoring Institutes, the dream of Joshua Das, a graduate of the United Theological College of Bangalore. Inspired by Margaret Shafer – Fifth Avenue’s now retired director of outreach ministry – to do something about the poverty and despair of people left behind when the nearby mines closed, Joshua founded the Human Development Foundation Trust with seed money from Rutgers Presbyterian Church.

The HDFT established training programs – tailoring for women and automotive repair for men – with the goal of providing hope and sustainable employment to this depressed and isolated community. A donation from the FAPC mission trip team allowed Joshua to take a five-month leave of absence from his job in Bangalore (a six-hour daily commute) to start training programs, but much remains to be done: he must find markets for the finished goods they create.

In a place much closer to home, another cry for help is answered. Bernadette Michel and Tim Eddy, FAPC mission trip volunteers, expertly dimple the drywall panels they nail to the walls of the Pearlington, Mississippi bungalow they are repairing for victims of the Katrina and Rita Hurricanes. Novices only a few days earlier, they join over 29,000 volunteers that the Presbyterian Church (USA) has sent for the recovery efforts of the hurricane-torn Presbyteries of Louisiana and Mississippi. FAPC has already sent three mission

*... continued on page 7*

## Bridging People to FAPC



One of Fifth Avenue’s fastest growing fellowship ministries is the Women’s Association’s Mary Jane Lightboun Bridge Club. More tables are added as new members come in. To join the club, contact the Women’s Association office at 212.247.0490.

...continued from page 1

teams to the Gulf and plans three more in 2008 (see “Upcoming FAPC Mission Work” below) as part of the congregation’s Bicentennial celebration. As in India, mission efforts of individuals help hundreds of people in hard-hit regions who have been overlooked by government or other programs.

In the past ten years, FAPC members have also donated their time in places as varied as Guatemala, Appalachia, Ghana, Korea, Egypt, Romania, Rosebud, SD, Madagascar, Jamaica and Mexico.

“Every year there is a chance for a FAPC member to serve God and others through mission work,” said Deborra Mullins, the outgoing chair of the mission trip committee. “It can be in another continent or much closer to home. It can be hard work or something that is very quick and easy...but it’s always rewarding. We would love to have more members involved.”

Fifth Avenue members are encouraged to become involved in this essential work of the church by:

- going on a mission trip if they can or contribute money to enable someone else to go;
- support FAPC benevolence funds for mission projects;
- learn about the communities and countries where the PC(USA) or its sister churches have a presence. Meeting social and material need is often a most effective means of presenting the Gospel in action, especially in impoverished areas. Many FAPC members have international ties and may be in a position to wield influence, however small, which enhances the well-being of people;

## Upcoming FAPC Mission Work



Photo: Deborra Mullins



Kimberly Dow meets women from the Shafer Tailoring Institute in India, some of whom made the costumes for the spring 2007 children’s musical. Photo: Deborra Mullins

- talk to those who have been on mission trips to learn of local needs. You may be the link to important resources – expertise on community water systems in Madagascar, product development and small business management for the Human Development Trust in India, licensed plumbers and electricians for rebuilding Gulf Coast communities;
- or, pray for our church’s missions.

Members and friends of all ages, ability and experience can lend a hand. If you are interested in joining the church mission trip committee or being a part of an upcoming project, please contact Naomi Kroeger at [nkroeger11@yahoo.com](mailto:nkroeger11@yahoo.com). Please join us in helping a world in need.

**February 14-19, 2008:** Extended weekend trip, covering the President’s Day holiday, to Luling, LA (work to be done in New Orleans).

**May 1-6, 2008:** Extended weekend trip, coinciding with the New Orleans Jazz Festival, to Luling, LA (work to be done in New Orleans).

**October 11-18, 2008:** Week-long trip, covering Columbus Day weekend, to Pearlinton, MS.

**Contacts:** Naomi Kroeger, Chair, Mission Trip Committee (e-mail: [nkroeger11@yahoo.com](mailto:nkroeger11@yahoo.com)); Debbie Mullins, coordinator, Gulf Coast Mission Trips (e-mail: [deborramullins@att.net](mailto:deborramullins@att.net)).

To learn about the mission activities of the PC(USA) at home and in other countries, the Mission Yearbook published by the PC(USA) is a valuable resource. You may obtain a copy by visiting the denomination’s website at [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org) or by calling 1.800.525.2612.