



**August 2023**

***Love the Journey***

We belong to each other. Sometimes it is easy to forget this fact because there are constant reminders of what divides us. The truth of the matter is we are intricately connected in every way imaginable. From the beginning of time, we all originated from one place; we all share one common humanity; and within each one of us, there is a part of the other. Instead of setting physical and mental walls, we should be intentional about designing a world that celebrates our commonalities as well as our individuality. The church is called to lead the way in this effort and if we do this well, we will transform our society.

I believe that either individually or collectively, we all have a significant part to play in furthering the great ends of the church. There is a specific call that God gives to a few individuals “to go” to a foreign place. This is the command that God gave to Abraham in Genesis chapter 12 and verse 4. This call is not an easy one to answer. To obey this command requires a steady faith, overcoming obstacles, and having an unwavering trust that every personal and public need will be met. To obey this call requires the faith to believe that God will open the hearts of those who belong to The Holy, Apostolic, Catholic Church, to collectively join you by offering provisions to support international mission.

Jonathan Byrd, five-time PGA Tour winner, is quoted as saying, “The one who loves walking will walk further than the one who loves the destination. When you fall in love with the journey, everything else takes care of itself.”

I have fallen in love with the journey. I have acquired a new mindset, new relationships, a new language, and a new worldview. In the process of loving the journey, I have seen the hand of God move in unimaginable ways.

I recently returned to my Malawi home after completing four months of Interpretation Ministry (IM) in the U.S. IM is an incredible opportunity for Mission Co-Workers to share details of their ministries with congregations. My IM visits allowed me to share my work and ministry with our partner, the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), and how this ministry relates to the Matthew 25 initiative, specifically, the eradication of systemic poverty through education.

As I engaged in IM, I found that there was no greater example of the inter-connectedness of people than to enter into a church, share the stories and my work as Education Facilitator, and then exit the same church

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feeling that I have connected and inspired those who love the mission of the church as much as I do. In one afternoon of sharing, I expand my community and my church family.



*Above left: Frederick Presbyterian Church, Frederick, Maryland. R-L, Pastor Eric Myers, Pam Hewetson, Rev. Cheryl Barnes, wife of Eric Myers, Lisa Myers*

*Above right: Dinner at the home of James and Victoria Munthali. R-L, Eva Thorp, Rev. Cheryl Barnes, James Munthali, Ann Marlow, Ron Marlow and Veronica Munthali.*

IM has reminded me that what you give is what you get to keep. We never have lack when we serve the God of abundance. I have experienced and received generous gifts of lodging, food, and fellowship from individuals and congregations. From the open hearts of congregations and individuals in the U.S. has come provision for children, schools, infrastructure, and projects for communities in Malawi. Touching the lives of people who are across the globe allows us to wholly celebrate the humanity and holiness of others.

My call to Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe has reminded me that what you give is what you get to keep. I have planted a garden on foreign soil and danced with children in local schools. I have held newborn babies and sat with elders in villages. I have inhaled the dust from the roads and the smell of sweet grilled corn. These are some of the reasons that I have fallen in love with the journey.

June 19, 2023, was my last day as Education Facilitator for the five Synods under the CCAP umbrella. I am not closing the chapter of this amazing call, I am simply turning the page to begin the next chapter of my work in Africa. I have accepted the position of Africa Area Coordinator for PCUSA World Mission, which is an extension of my call to serve our partners in Africa. God is giving me more places to walk and enlarging my territory. If you have enjoyed reading about



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*RCA Global Mission does not receive denominational assessments or covenant shares. We depend on the faithful generosity of churches and individuals.*

my journey, I invite you to read the newsletters of my RCA colleagues.

The RCA and PCUSA are working with our partner the CCAP General Assembly to transition this work to an interim and eventually new Education Facilitator. RCA Global Mission Africa Supervisor Derrick Jones will be providing an update on the plan to continue supporting these vital education endeavors of our partner shortly.

I am grateful for the support of congregations, presbyteries, mission networks, and individuals who have generously supported this very important work and who walked alongside me. I ask that you continue to provide financial support for this work and all of the Mission Co-Workers who serve our partners in African countries.

*Zikomo* (Thank you)

Cheryl Barnes