



RCA Missionary Update

from the Fords

St. Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya, is an international and ecumenical institution that prepares men and women for ministry in the Christian church and in society. Founded in 1903 as a divinity school, St. Paul's recently expanded to become a Christian university.

Peter teaches courses on the Arabic language, the Qur'an, Islamic history, and other Islam-related topics in the post-graduate program in Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations (ICMR) at St. Paul's University. He also works with students on a personal level to help them develop appropriate attitudes toward the ministry of engaging with Muslims, and to teach others to do the same. Patty helps to coordinate the Satellite Diploma Program at St. Paul's, so that several outlying Bible schools can offer a Diploma in Theology under the supervision of St. Paul's University.

Kenya facts:

- Population: 33,829,600
- Size: 582,646 square kilometers (slightly smaller than Texas)
- Major religions: 70 percent Christian, 20 percent Muslim, 10 percent indigenous and other beliefs



MINISTRY

Theological Education

LOCATION

Limuru, Kenya

PARTNER

St. Paul's University

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2011 Yearly Report to Supporting Churches from the Fords

In one sentence, what is your ministry's primary goal?

Peter teaches courses in Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations (ICMR) at St. Paul's University, for Christian graduate students coming from various African countries. Patty coordinates the satellite Diploma in Theology program for outlying Bible schools affiliated with St. Paul's University.

Over the past year, how have you seen God working in your ministry? Please share both the progress and the setbacks with respect to your ministry goals. Please include your joys, challenges, and/or disappointments.

Peter's time continues to focus on African Christian students who are doing in-depth study of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations. Together, they seek to understand how the church in their home countries can work with Muslims to foster peaceful relations, and how Christians can present a faithful yet respectful witness to their faith in Jesus Christ. Peter has seen many students grow in this way, coming from countries such as Sudan (both north and south), Rwanda, Tanzania, Madagascar and Senegal – as well as Kenya.

Peter has also worked on other related projects. He is chairing a committee at St. Paul's University which is preparing a detailed proposal for a major revision of the ICMR masters program; it will be expanded to include other concentrations within the field of Religious Studies, such as "Religion and Missions" and "Religion, Conflict and Reconciliation." This involves many hours sorting through government requirements, as well as differing perspectives among the staff. Another project was his participation in a major symposium last June on "The Qur'an and Contemporary Issues" held at the University of Nairobi. This allowed him to interact with many Muslim scholars from the region, several of whom had never met a Christian scholar of Islam before.

Patty has been able to make significant improvements to the satellite Diploma in Theology program. She coordinated a major revision of the Diploma in Theology syllabus and has worked to improve communication between the outlying colleges and the theology faculty at St. Paul's University. Sometimes the work is frustrating when key contributors don't

follow through on time with the writing or marking of exams, etc. But the overall structure of her job is much improved from when she took it over two years ago, and her Kenyan supervisors have appreciated her important contribution.

Share any physical or spiritual health issues that have impacted your ministry during this past year.

We continue to thank God for excellent health. We continue to exercise daily, and we participated in RCA's "Amazing Pace" program, almost always beating the daily average of steps walked. In addition to personal and family devotions, Sunday worship and campus chapels, we participate each week in a small campus fellowship which has helped to bring us closer to our Kenyan colleagues as true brothers and sisters in Christ.

Briefly discuss any goals, dreams, and/or changes you would anticipate in your ministry for the coming year.

The major upcoming event this year will be our six-month Home Assignment, from late June to December. One goal will be to help Andrew transition from high school here to college life in the U.S. Our major ministry during those months will be to visit as many of our supporting churches as possible. We look forward to seeing you all in person after several years of ministry on this side of the globe!

Share any specific project related needs and other ways supporting churches might be able to assist you.

In recent years, the income from our supporting churches has not been able to keep up with the increasing expenses of our budget. The difficult economy has forced some congregations to reduce or withdraw their contribution towards our support. Currently our support level is down by six PIM shares (Partnership in Ministry). We hope that our personal visits this year will encourage some churches who are able, to help reduce this deficit through an increase in their giving. We also hope to visit new churches who might be interested in becoming support partners.

Please tell us about ongoing as well as special prayer needs you may have at this time.

We ask your prayers especially for Andrew as he graduates from Rosslyn Academy in May. He has spent his entire life in Africa except for short summer visits to the U.S. He sometimes comments that he feels more African than American! But he is excited to embark on his college studies in the field of Animation, and he is glad to be able to do this at a reputable Christian school (Regent University in Virginia Beach). Otherwise, we invite prayer for safety as we travel many miles during our Home Assignment, and for positive visits with you, our supporting churches and friends.

We would also invite your prayers as we seek to comfort several faculty colleagues and families who have lost family members during the last year, and who continue to grieve over their loss. One of our teachers died of cancer, leaving behind a widow and eight children (three their own, five orphan nieces and nephews); two colleagues lost young children, and one a son-in-law.

In one sentence, please thank all those who pray and support you and your RCA ministry.

Some of you have journeyed with us throughout our nearly 30 years of RCA missionary service, while others have come on board more recently – yet all of you are equally important in this kingdom task, and without you our life's vocation overseas would have been impossible. So thank you one and all!



Please visit www.rca.org/pford for more information about us, prayer items for our ministry, and donation information.

To order prayer cards for us and our ministry, please contact Nancy Ellens at (800) 968-3943 or nellens@rca.org.