

The Israel/Palestine Mission Network, out of its concern for partnership mission and just peace in the Holy Land, supports the Dallas statement

The Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the PC(USA), operating through its Steering Committee, expresses its strong support for the bold and broad vision set out in the “Invitation to Expanding Partnership in God’s Mission,” the document produced at the January, 2008, gathering in Dallas, Texas. With them, we affirm that we seek to witness boldly to our faith through our presence and by our service, as we “do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.”

We also affirm the importance of doing mission together. While we acknowledge that there are differences in interpretations of our calling, we also know that the work of Christ’s church is seriously weakened by conflicts and divisions. In all that we do, we seek to operate in ways that are respectful of those with whom we disagree, remaining in communion with them, to the extent that is within our control.

We welcome the recognition of the need for new patterns in mission. A key part of that for us is the recognition that, in the part of the world which is our particular concern, the church of Christ has been an important force since well before the Presbyterian Church itself was formed. Our own denomination and its historical antecedents have been actively involved there for over 180 years. We have many deep links with the Christian church there. A central focus of our part in God’s Mission in that part of the world involves our efforts to strengthen and support the work of our Global Partners there.

That starting point has three implications for us.

1) We hold firmly to the terminology and the vision that inspired it, that our mission personnel be referred to not as missionaries but as mission co-workers. This has been the pattern in our denomination for some time now; we believe it is valid and important. We use that terminology in our own work, and urge others to do the same.

2) The Christian church in the Holy Land today is under grave stress. It operates under occupation by a set of powers seen by our Christian partners as profoundly unjust, an occupation which threatens their economic, social, political and religious welfare in a profound and overwhelming way. Christian leaders, as well as their flock, are severely under threat. Some have been killed, as they seek to live out their faith.

3) As Americans, we know that our government is widely seen by our Christian partners in the Holy Land as being complicit in power structures that dominate their part of the world.

In that context, our witness to Christ’s calling to God’s mission requires that issues of justice be a central focus of all that we do. It requires a recognition that direct proclamation of the gospel by American mission co-workers can put our Christian partners at risk. It has led us to a deep respect for and many good working ties with Muslims and Jews as well as other Christians who share many aspects of our vision. We seek to be faithful in witnessing to Jesus Christ and all that

he means to us; we seek to do that with clarity, but without being triumphal. We know that our witness must be done with great humility.

In that spirit, we are glad to endorse and support the broad vision set out in the “Invitation to Expanding Partnership in God’s Mission.”

One of the ways in which our network has sought to implement this vision is through our Just Peace campaign. To date, this has resulted in gifts and pledges of over \$50,000, which has enabled us to send \$20,000 to address the suffering in Gaza and \$10,000 to support Presbyterian mission co-workers in Israel and Palestine. Many in our network have traveled to the region to walk with our brothers and sisters, to listen and learn from them and to encourage them as they seek to hold firm to the faith which we share. We know that God’s yearning is for shalom for all in that troubled part of the world: for Palestinians as well as Israelis, for Christians as well as Muslims and Jews. By our own personal witness and by our support for partners who share that vision, we seek to bring that vision to reality. In God’s good time, it will come.