

## *Partnership in the New Century: Continuity and Change*

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The theological themes in Ephesians provide a broad conceptual framework for understanding the fullness of God's holistic cosmic mission of salvation, liberation, redemption, and reconciliation in the world. Mission begins with the fullness of who God is—a triune relational community of love. The source of all mission is the divine gracious initiative, the overflowing of the mercy, love, and grace of the triune God. The mission of God, or *missio Dei*, is to establish a universal reign of harmonious loving relationships throughout creation. *Missio Dei* must be seen from the perspective of “the mystery of God's will . . . to gather up all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth” (1.10). Our Maker and Redeemer is gathering up, summing up, uniting and bringing together all creatures and all of creation under a single head, the Lord Jesus Christ (1.20-23). The ultimate goal of history and of God's mission is cosmic renewal and the unity of God's people and universe in the peaceful, loving, and just realm or reign of God.

God's mission creates and invites the church to be an instrument and partner in God's missionary dialogue in the world, serving God's kingdom purposes. A key word in Ephesians is *pleroma* which means “rich fullness,” “totality,” “to fill something completely.” The fullness of our triune God and the total mission work of God fill the church and the universe which results in fullness of life for all. God's mission breaks down barriers, creating in Christ “one new humanity” of reconciliation (2.14-22), and summons us to cultivate in love “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (4.1-3). Because there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God” (4.4-6), we all participate in one common mission—God's mission—with the rich diversity and fullness of gifts given to us (4.7-12) which presupposes unity and cooperation. Within this theological framework, my thesis is that God's missionary dialogue includes the full participation of a *pleroma* of participants who are united as partners in mutual interdependence.

### *Continuity*

Why do we continue to do mission in partnership? Not merely because it has been a slogan in ecumenical church councils for nearly a century. Not because it is popular in business in a globalized world. Not for pragmatic or strategic reasons. Not because our practice is way behind our discourse. Presbyterians do mission in partnership for biblical and theological reasons. We must do mission in partnership because of our missiology—what we believe about God's mission.

Part I of *Called as Partners in Christ's Service: the Practice of God's Mission* is entitled “Why? Biblical and Theological Foundations of Partnership.” Based on John's Gospel, I say:

The Trinity is a community of mutuality and reciprocity that reaches out beyond God's self to create and love the world. . . . Partnership is not merely a means, method, or approach to mission. *Partnership is a fundamental dynamic of the triune missionary God of love who is, acts, and relates in mutual partnership in sending the Son, the Spirit, and the church into the world as instruments of God's saving mission.* Just as partnership

and mission are part of the essence of the triune God, “‘partnership in mission’ also belongs to the essence of the Church: partnership is not so much what the Church *does* as what it *is*.”<sup>1</sup>

Míguez Bonino says we are included in the triune “missionary dialogue” as “actors” or “coactors.” God’s mission “enables, demands, and incorporates the ‘partner’ God has chosen into its own dynamic.”<sup>2</sup> We are brought into the trinitarian love, unity, and mission partnership. As “junior”<sup>3</sup> partners of the triune God we become partners of one another in God’s mission.

In ecumenical circles we have been talking about mission in partnership for 80 years,<sup>4</sup> but our practice is still in its beginnings. Partnership is a discipline that takes much patience, dialogue, learning, and unlearning, because, as J. Andrew Kirk says, “there are real difficulties in the way of a truly equal relationship.” Kirk understands partnership as different parts of the Church “sharing a common life,” goals, projects, gifts, resources, and suffering with “shared responsibilities.”<sup>5</sup>

I find it extremely instructive that in 1978 René Padilla presented an essay on “The Fullness of Mission” and one of the topics was “partnership and unity.” He said: “When Christians fail to work as partners in mission, they also fail to manifest concretely the new reality that they proclaim in the gospel. Because there is one world, one church, and one gospel, the Christian mission cannot be anything other than mission in partnership. . . . Mission is inseparable from unity, and unity is far more than a question of structures.”<sup>6</sup> Recently Pope Benedict XVI said that ecumenism is not an option for the church. It is an obligation. I would add that partnership in mission is not an option for the church. It is an obligation and a gift of the triune God.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has been a major conversation partner and contributor in the ecumenical movement and in the quest for equal partnerships in mission. The policy statement “Presbyterians Do Mission in Partnership” adopted by the 215<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2003) is a sound theological summary which can continue to guide us in the new century. It acknowledges that “the discipline of partnership” recognizes “our human limitations” and “our fundamental unity in Jesus Christ” and “broadens our awareness of how interconnected God’s mission is at the local, national and global levels.” Furthermore, “The practice of partnership guides our whole connectional church” which means both “within and beyond our connectional community.” Partnership means “that mission can best be done by joining hands with those who share a common vision. Partnership in mission involves two or more organizations who agree to submit themselves to a common task or goal, mutually giving and receiving and surrounded by prayer.”<sup>7</sup>

The formulation of this profound statement is the result of over 150 years of mission work during which bilateral church-to-church relationships have been birthed, developed, and nurtured with 167 denominations in 80 countries. Those churches and those partnerships have been through many stages and crises, including “moratoriums.” Some of our partners are larger than the PC(USA) and send their own mission workers to other countries and need fewer “traditional” PC(USA) mission workers. A few relationships have been severed. The great majority have come “of age” and official GA-to-GA memorandums of understanding express the new way of relating as equals and partners in God’s mission with shared decision making. Together we do three-way mission in other more needy places and explore new mission challenges such as the

AIDS epidemic and reconciliation. In most of our bilateral relationships there has been a reversal of roles. They guide, lead, and challenge us. We continue to be open to new partners such as the Evangelical Presbyterian and Reformed Church of Peru and the Reformed Churches in Argentina.

In addition to the solid foundation of long-term bilateral church-to-church relationships, the theology of the PC(USA)<sup>8</sup> has led us to seek and participate actively in a web of ecumenical relationships and councils at global, continental, regional, and national levels. Today we sit side-by-side with many of our partner denominations at these councils that challenge us with prophetic visionary action. The Middle East Council of Churches is an example that inspires and guide us.

Under the umbrella of these bilateral and ecumenical relationships there are 118 presbytery and synod international partnerships and many local congregation partnerships. PC(USA) mission work goes beyond our bilateral and conciliar relationships. Examples are the Joining Hands Against Hunger networks and multidenominational partnerships among “unreached” peoples.

Partnership means continuity and maturity of our bilateral and ecumenical relationships.

### *Critique*

Philip Wickeri helps us understand that “we are not there yet,” that we have used the term *partnership* “too easily and uncritically” and leads us to a necessary critique. He says,

‘Presbyterians Do Mission in Partnership’ is an attempt to articulate an agreed-upon meaning, but it does not address the ways in which both the theology and the practice of mission partnership have fallen short in the past, nor does it chart a path for what is needed in the future. Without a critical perspective on existing mission practices, structures, and working styles, any statement on partnership in mission lacks a prophetic cutting edge.<sup>9</sup>

Our partners churches, often impatient with persistent inequalities, help us understand where we “have not been willing to follow through with the radical demands of what partnership and working together in God’s mission requires.”<sup>10</sup> Wickeri articulates one of my greatest frustrations when he says: “The use of the term may make churches in the North feel that they are in collaborative and reciprocal relationships in mission, but it can also hide the stubborn reality of inequality, dependency, domination, and the sense that ‘we’ are in control of the *missio dei*.”<sup>11</sup>

Wickeri concludes his study with a concern about a “new missionary assertiveness” and “power-centered approach to mission” as part of the results of 9/11 and the war in Iraq.<sup>12</sup> The December 2006 issue of *Reformed World* was dedicated to “Empire”<sup>13</sup> and shows how empire-building and political, economic, and cultural imposition can influence mission, offering a critique we need to hear. The second part of *Called as Partners in Christ’s Service* where I describe three vital “Attitudes of Partnership”—Respect, Compassion, and Humility—is a critique of disrespectful,

insensitive, and arrogant attitudes we often show in mission without ever realizing it.

René Padilla's presentation on "partnership and unity" in mission is prefaced by a strong critique of "the growing numerical strength of North American Protestant missions (almost wholly dependent on North American personnel, leadership, and finances) after World War II."<sup>14</sup> He goes on to say that as long as Western leadership in policies and patterns of missionary work, and mentalities of colonial dependence or manifest destiny continue, "partnership is no more than a myth." Furthermore, "In many cases missionary work continues to be done from a position of political and economic power and with the assumption of Western superiority in matters of culture and race."<sup>15</sup> How much real progress have we made since Padilla said this 30 years ago?

Most of our difficulties go back to the issues of unequal power and money. Latin American missiologists contend that there are two predominant models of mission: 1) out-of-affluence; and 2) out-of-poverty. The second was the New Testament model and is the model of the mission movement of the majority church in the South today. Jonathan Bonk wrote a critical study *Missions and Money: Affluence as a Western Missionary Problem*.<sup>16</sup> Padilla affirms that "Giving and receiving cannot be maintained unless there is between the churches a mature relationship" of reciprocity and interdependence.<sup>17</sup> When Andrew Kirk talks about "obstacles to partnership," he says that "Truly equal sharing will remain problematic across the world Church as long as material resources are so unevenly owned."<sup>18</sup> He further states, "As long as economic relationships are not changed, dependency rather than full interdependence is built into the situation. There can be no genuine partnership."<sup>19</sup> We cannot move into the new century talking about our partnerships without a critical reflection on how unequal power and money lead to attitudes (usually unintentional) of arrogance and superiority and on our models and practices of mission "out-of-affluence" and their negative consequences. Giving sometimes can be harmful.<sup>20</sup>

In November, 2007, I attended the First Ecumenical Missionary Congress of the National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil (CONIC). A recurring concern was the entrepreneurial spirit of the globalized free market which results in mission and evangelism marked by *competition* without partnership. A major obstacle in mission today is the competition between Christians and churches. We must be critically aware of ways we fall into this competitive trap.

### ***Changes***

While we treasure and critically mature our historical bilateral partnerships and our participation in ecumenical councils, we must also move beyond them. In Andrew Walls' essay "The Old Age of the Missionary Movement," he says "What is changing is not the task, but the means and the mode."<sup>21</sup> Paul Pierson wrote an essay entitled "Beyond Sodalities and Modalities: Organizing for Mission in the Twenty-first Century" which acknowledges that "throughout two millennia of the church's participation in mission, we see tension between the leaders of the established churches and the visionaries on the periphery."<sup>22</sup> Philip Wickeri pushes us to think about the need for changes in our structures of mission or transforming mission structures.

I see the Global Christian Forum held near Nairobi, Kenya, November 6-9, 2007, as

paradigmatic of structural changes in mission partnerships today. In the mid-1990s Konrad Raiser foresaw a paradigm shift in *Ecumenism in Transition*,<sup>23</sup> admitted that the ecumenical movement is broader than the World Council of Churches, and proposed the Forum. The WCC initiated the nine-year process and “sees itself as one of the participating organizations alongside others.” With 240 representatives from historic Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, Catholic, Evangelical and Pentecostal<sup>24</sup> churches and interchurch organizations from over 70 countries, it was the “most diverse Christian gathering ever to discuss unity and common witness.”<sup>25</sup> Samuel Kobia, WCC General Secretary said at the opening: “I hope that we will take the risk of working together,” and forge “new relations among ourselves and between our churches” to strengthen Christian unity.<sup>26</sup>

The final Message was a “historic breakthrough.” The Global Christian Forum process will go forward as an open platform for encounter and dialogue whose goal is to “foster mutual respect, explore and address common challenges.” Participants affirmed their desire “to move out of the familiar ground, [and] to meet each other on a common ground where mutual trust might flourish”, and where they “might be empowered to celebrate, enter into dialogue and act together” in spite of differences. The message affirms the participants’ commitment to promote “even greater understanding and cooperation among Christians” and to overcome divisions.<sup>27</sup>

A “Proposals for the future” document clarified that the forum’s focus will continue to be “relationships” and “conversations”, while “any resulting joint actions will be outworked through the participating churches and organizations”. The process will continue to be based on “committed participation” rather than become a “membership organization” and the “circle of participation” will be “broadened and deepened”.<sup>28</sup>

This new ecumenical paradigm which brings more conversation partners to the table and moves beyond structures of formal membership can guide the PC(USA) as we mobilize a growing fullness of participants in our mission endeavors. This consultation is a great start. In Part 3 of *Called as Partners* on “Practices of Partnership” I point to the practices which missiologists and the Southern church are emphasizing. Dialogue and sharing are paramount. Wickeri says: “Transforming structures of mission requires genuine dialogue among all parties in the relationship—dialogue about mission and dialogue about power.”<sup>29</sup> Mission is relational. Mission is *koinovia*. The practices we in the North most need to develop are true listening and receiving.

Obviously, no person or congregation does mission alone. The local congregation is now the primary locus of mission. Hands-on involvement has been facilitated by technology and ease in transportation. In our present context of continuity and tremendous changes, “the PC(USA) has enormous possibilities to test out new ideas in practice as we enter more deeply into conversation with local congregations and judicatories as well as with churches and mission organizations both here and overseas.”<sup>30</sup> Being a connectional church, one new idea we have tested is networking.

In 1997 Stanley H. Skreslet wrote about “networking” as a new model of mission whose institutional form is mirrored in the “non-governmental organization” (NGO), and which reflects the trend to “build relationships, expand alliances, and establish networks of groups and

individuals committed to values implied by the biblical reign of God.”<sup>31</sup> In addition to being flexible and holistic, networking is “*essentially egalitarian*. It assumes no fixed center. Networks do not need hierarchies and function most purely without them. Networking is thus rigorously horizontal in approach, rather than vertical, and is founded on the ideal of interdependent relationships.”<sup>32</sup> PC(USA) local congregations and judicatories with global partnerships have come together to form 26 country mission networks. The network meetings during the Mission Celebration 07 in Louisville demonstrated the energy of the networked approach which gathers together and integrates parts of the Body who participate in God’s mission in relationship to one another. The sum is indeed greater than the parts.

“Working Together: Beyond Individual Efforts to Networks of Collaboration,” chapter 9 of *The Changing Face of World Missions*,<sup>33</sup> describes Networks, Team Efforts, and Strategic Collaboration of specialized organizations, all of which focus on interdependence, informal relationships, and connecting people and peers who cooperate. In the evaluation of Strategic Collaboration, an important point is that specialized mission organizations and new initiatives have been created to supplement, support, and serve churches and other agencies to strengthen partnerships and to give rise to new forms of engagement beyond present partnerships. Paul Pierson points us to the need for more cooperation with “multidenominational and multinational partnerships” and encourages us to relate to the “new, cutting-edge movements in the majority world, both to learn from them and to discover how we can serve the *missio Dei* together.”<sup>34</sup>

In an article “Local-Global Mission: The Cutting Edge,” I place the triune God at the center of a diagram to remind us that we partner in God’s mission initiative, and the two other major players are LOCAL CONGREGATION(S) and THE GLOBAL CHURCH.<sup>35</sup> On this, we all agree. Then I place National Denominational Structures on the same level as many others, including Mission Organizations and Foundations. With the increase of multiple mission initiators and mobilizers, today there is a need for greater collaboration between all Presbyterians in mission with each other.<sup>36</sup> We need formal or informal structures of connectedness<sup>37</sup> which facilitate mutual accountability and a common agreement on the guiding principles of a unified Presbyterian witness to the world. Each group represented here is called to share its unique gifts and to see its mission structures as part of the whole church and of God’s holistic mission. Our denominational ministry areas World Mission, Relief and Development, and Peace and Justice partner with each other and others to enable a fullness of partnerships. The consultant role of World Mission’s area coordinators, regional liaisons, and mission personnel assigned as partnership facilitators and delegation hosts is key in sharing information and providing guidance to avoid a poor use of resources, “exploitation of well-meaning Western Christians,” or “paternalism and dependency. Here mission agencies are a great source of expertise, advice, and encouragement.”<sup>38</sup>

### ***Criteria***

By what criteria are our partnerships defined? I find helpful in Wickeri’s paper a statement from the Christian Conference of Asia of “approaches to mission that are rejected,” as well as basic principles from the United Church of Christ in the Philippines.<sup>39</sup> Using these and the five Principles of Partnership in “Presbyterians Do Mission in Partnership” (Shared Grace and Thanksgiving; Mutuality and Interdependence; Recognition and Respect; Open Dialogue and

Transparency; and Sharing of Resources), I would like to suggest the following criteria to guide the mission participants of the PC(USA) in defining new and old partnerships with integrity.

1. *Partnerships* are relationships with churches or organizations which share common concerns and agree to collaborate in the *missio Dei* from the perspective of a clear post-colonial, anti-imperialistic missiology with a congruency of strategies, values, attitudes, and practices.
2. *Partnerships* are always two-way or multilateral relationships with shared decision-making, open dialogue and transparency concerning joint projects, strategies, funds and mission personnel. One-way relationships with initiative, domination, or control by one party are not partnerships. Unilateral relationships which do not ensure the dignity of others as subjects are not partnerships.
3. In relationships with new global *partners*, the partner from the PC(USA) always enters as a “junior partner” at the invitation of others and never as leaders. This shows true recognition and respect for the leadership of the global church in the South in the missionary movement today.
4. *Partnership* calls for the mutual sharing of all types of resources, for mutual giving and receiving, for mutual service. Relationships that are “finance-dominated” or based on money, one-way giving, or donor-control are not partnerships.<sup>40</sup> Authentic partnerships begin with a long period of getting to know one another by sharing common experiences of faith and life.
5. *Partnership* calls for interdependence in which mutual aid comes to all and where mutual accountability resides. All monetary gifts of personal support to individuals should be avoided with gifts always going through local accountability structures in benefit of the whole community. All mission initiators and agencies should openly share what they give with other collaborators.
6. *Partnership* promotes respect for all historical PC(USA) partners and mutual cooperation between all PC(USA) participants in God’s mission. We reject mission initiatives which might cause divisions, barriers, conflicts, rivalries, and competition in the one Body of Christ.
7. *Partnerships* recognize that the church in each place has primary responsibility for evangelism in that place and the right to discern what the Spirit is doing among them and to set its own agenda. Partners seek to discern the agenda of their partner and to join them in it when invited. In prophetic actions, partners stand in solidarity and in advocacy on behalf of their partners.
8. *Partnerships* fit within a greater picture of God’s holistic local-global mission with a rich fullness of participants in it. They seek to recognize and value all who are engaged in specific ministries and thus avoid duplication of efforts in order to be responsible stewards of resources.
9. *Partnerships* can be nurtured by short-term mission trips and the service of short-term mission volunteers, but they also value the need for long-term commitments to sustainability, integrity of creation, self-development, and self-support, and often depend on long-term mission personnel for guidance concerning culture, language, history, and relationships with partner churches.

10. *Partnerships* vary according to the objectives or aspect of holistic mission. In evangelism we support the efforts and leaders of local churches when present. In frontier evangelism where there is no church, we respectfully join hands with neighboring churches. In compassionate service and social justice, a broad array of partners is possible, including NGOs, networks, and councils.

## Conclusion

In this new century the PC(USA) is assuming the identity of a missional church where denominational structures, judicatories and local congregations exist to serve God's mission at God's initiative for God's glory. We continue to embrace our historic denominational and ecumenical partnerships, as well as new aspects, challenges, and opportunities of partnership such as the role and relation of congregations, networks, and agencies within the PC(USA) which are not formally linked with World Mission,<sup>41</sup> and Presbyterians serving through para-parochial mission agencies. All mission initiators serve God's mission and can give a united PC(USA) missional witness to the world as we learn to work in formal and informal partnership agreements and develop structures of connectedness which implement interdependence and remind the whole church of our call as a missional community which celebrates our unity in our full diversity.

As we seek to practice authentic partnerships with each other internally and with others around the world, six important keys are: connectedness, cooperation, complementarity, communication, convergence, and consultation. We dare not ignore the words of Andrew Kirk: "Failure of different Churches, agencies and individual Christians to work together wherever they can has a detrimental effect on mission. It causes a credibility gap between reality and the message [and] a tragic waste of resources in the duplication of time, money and human abilities."<sup>42</sup>

We are invited to join the triune missionary God who is gathering together and summing up all parts of God's holistic mission of cosmic renewal and uniting all of the participants in the fullness of God's mission of reconciliation, healing, and love. Through our common witness we can become partners of the Lord of the church who is filling and building up the PC(USA), the global faith community, and the universe, thus bringing in the realm of God for the glory of God.

*Sherron Kay George for PC(USA) Church-wide Mission Consultation, Dallas, Jan 16-18, 2008*

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1. Sherron Kay George. *Called as Partners in Christ's Service: the Practice of God's Mission* (Louisville: Geneva Press, 2004) p. 1. At the end I quote J. Andrew Kirk. *What Is Mission? Theological Explorations* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), p. 187.

2. José Míguez Bonino. *Faces of Latin American Protestantism*. Translated by Eugene L. Stockwell. (Grand Rapids, MI. William B. Eerdmans: 1997), p. 141.

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3. Shirley C. Guthrie says we are “unlikely partners,” “junior partners,” and “servant partners” who “share in God’s saving and renewing work in the world.” *God for the World— Church for the World: The Mission of the Church in Today’s World* (Louisville, KY: Witherspoon Press, 2000), pp. 34-37. This is an excellent study guide for churches with six sessions.

4. In *Partnership, Solidarity, and Friendship: Transforming Structures in Mission* A Study Paper for the PC(USA) (Louisville:WMD, 2003) Philip L. Wickeri has a wonderful historical review of the discussions on partnership. The seeds were planted at the International Missionary Council (IMC) in Jerusalem in 1928 and the concept became more specific at the IMC meeting at Whitby in 1947 with the theme “partners in obedience.” It was further elaborated at the IMC in Willingen (1952) from the perspective of *missio dei*. Philip contends that “There has been no real development of the ideas of partnership in mission since Bangkok,” p. 9 (Bangkok Assembly of the WCC’s Commission on World Mission and Evangelism in 1972).

5. J. Andrew Kirk. *What Is Mission?*, p. 184, 188-193.

6. René Padilla. “The Fullness of Mission” in *Mission Between the Times: Essays on the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1978), p. 136.

This quote was preceded by these words which are very much in accord with the theology of Ephesians: “A universal gospel calls for a universal church, in which all Christians are effectively involved in the world mission as equal members in the body of Christ. Partnership in mission is not merely a question of practical convenience but the necessary consequence of God’s purpose for the church and for the whole of humanity revealed in Jesus Christ.”

7. “Presbyterians Do Mission in Partnership.” Louisville: Presbyterian Church (USA), adopted by the 215<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2003). PDS 74-200-03-001.

8. See “The Unity of the Church” of the *Book of Order* (G-4.0200). The theology and missiology in chapters 3 and 4 of the *Book of Order* are extremely rich.

9. Philip L. Wickeri. *Partnership, Solidarity, and Friendship: Transforming Structures in Mission* A Study Paper for the PC(USA) (Louisville:WMD, 2003) p. 3.

10. Philip L. Wickeri, p. 3

11. Philip L. Wickeri, p. 10

12. Wickeri, p. 23.

13. “Empire” *Reformed World* 56(4) December 2006. Published by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in Geneva. The papers published in this edition are a result of a WARC

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consultation in Manila in July 2006 whose theme was “Theological Analysis and Action on Global Empire Today.”

14. René Padilla, p. 134.

15. Ibid.

16. Jonathan J. Bonk. *Missions and Money: Affluence as a Western Missionary Problem* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991).

17. René Padilla, p. 137.

18. Andrew Kirk, p. 191.

19. Andrew Kirk, p. 192.

20. Mission co-worker in Guatemala, Dennis Smith, gave a penetrating talk entitled “Do No Harm” which demonstrates some of the problems affluence can cause.

21. Andrew F. Walls. “The Old Age of the Missionary Movement” in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), p. 261.

22. Paul E. Pierson. “Beyond Sodalities and Modalities: Organizing for Mission in the Twenty-first Century” in *Evangelical, Ecumenical, and Anabaptist Missiologies in Conversation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), p. 225.

23. Konrad Raiser. *Ecumenism in Transition*. Translated by Tony Coates (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991).

24. It is significant that about half of the participants were Evangelicals and Pentecostals who are not members of the WCC.

25. “Most Diverse Christian Gathering Ever to Discuss Unity and Common Witness.” World Council of Churches - News Release - 05/11/2007.

26. “Let’s Take Risks, Kobia Tells Global Christian Forum.” World Council of Churches - News Release - 07/11/2007.

27. “‘Historic Breakthrough’ - Global Christian Forum to go Forward, extending an Invitation to Join the Encounter.” World Council of Churches - News Release - 12/11/2007.

28. Ibid.

29. Wickeri, p. 19.

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30. Wickeri, p. 4.

31. Stanley H. Skreslet. "Networking, Civil Society, and the NGO: A New Model for Ecumenical Mission." *Missiology* 25(3):308.

32. Ibid, p. 309.

33. Michael Pocock, Gailyn Van Rheenen, Douglas McConnell. *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005).

34. Paul E. Pierson. "Beyond Sodalities and Modalities: Organizing for Mission in the Twenty-first Century," p. 233.

35. Sherron K. George. "Local-Global Mission: The Cutting Edge." *Missiology* 28(2):189.

36. Andrew Kirk reminds us that "One particular aspect of partnership is the position occupied by agencies within the Church which are not directly linked to the Churches' formal structures" (p. 198). He suggests that such voluntary agencies must constantly wrestle with the following questions: loyalties, openness to other Christians, accountability, duplication, and long-term commitment" and ultimately seek "co-operation in mission" (pp. 199-201).

37. See Darrell Guder's essay in the last chapter of *Missional Church* entitled "Missional Connectedness: The Community of Communities in Mission." (Grand Rapids: Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998). He says the local congregation is a primary agent in mission, but not in isolation. We need connecting structures that provide a "missional connectedness for the universal church in all its diversity" and that "the connecting structures are crucial to the nature of the church as the people of God for God's mission" (p. 249). Furthermore, he says that catholicity demands attention to "the relationship, or lack of it," between denominational structures and local or specialized agencies, and "for the sake of missional integrity, these diverse agents of mission need to move toward each other in dialogue" (p. 258).

38. Pearson, p. 233.

39. Wickeri, pp. 21-22, 27-28.

40. I talk about the practice of mutual receiving and giving and gift exchange in *Called as Partners*, pp. 73-76. In a communication to the Moderators/Conveners of PC(USA) Mission Networks, Hunter Farrell said the following: "One of the biggest problems in congregational twinning projects, presbytery partnerships, and other mission partnerships (including church-to-church partnerships at the national level!) Is that all of us are tempted to think that money is the key to personal and societal transformation. When we put it in such stark terms, of course, we would all maintain this isn't the case, but often our relationships have been built around

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financial, rather than human, resources. This shaping of mission relationships around money means all of us (Christians from the Global North *and* the Global South) tend to expect North American Christians to be the givers (because they generally have greater financial resources) and Christians from the Global South to be the receivers (because they generally have fewer financial resources). It's not about money and, in fact, money is often one of the greatest barriers to mission (Jonathan Bonk's *Missions and Money* raises disturbing, but important, issues around this subject." I would add that those of us from the Global North need desperately to learn to be receivers and to accept those from the Global South as givers. See also chapter 10, "The Changing Uses of Money: From Self-support to International Partnerships" in *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends* which begins saying: "Money is a two-edged sword—it can either empower or hinder missionary efforts" (p. 279). They show many of the problems of mission workers operating out of affluence, as well as harmful short-term mission gifts. One solution is to strictly pursue the goal of responsible self-supporting churches with no more money from outside. Another option is the development of authentic international partnerships based on trust, equality, relationships, accountability, and mutual complementation in which U.S. mission agencies employ national missionaries to help the churches in their own countries provide structures to become mission-sending movements.

Andrew Walls says: "relationships so easily become finance-dominated; it is hard to keep relations on an equal footing when the regular topic of conversation is money, and how much" (p. 253). René Padilla says: "The possibility of reciprocal giving between churches is a basic premise without which no healthy relationship between rich and poor churches is attainable. . . . Giving and receiving cannot be maintained unless there is between the churches a mature relationship based on the gospel" (p. 137).

41. At the end of his essay "Beyond Sodalities and Modalities," Paul Pearson emphasizes the importance of partnerships which lead to a "functional, task-oriented ecumenism" and "where each group shares its unique gifts," and finally suggests three roles that the denominational agency (World Mission) can have in relation to local congregations, mission initiators and agencies committed to certain projects: as a *contractor*, in a *partnership of equals*, or as a *consultant* (pp. 233-234).

42. Andrew Kirk, p. 201.