

2008 U.S.A. Mission Experience Commissioning Service

Call to Worship

One: Hear these words of Scripture: "For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (*Deut. 10:17-19*).

We gather together today to honor and affirm our sisters, (*insert names of participants*), who have chosen to embrace stranger-ness. They have chosen to enter into foreign territory here around our own borders, and learn more about the experience of the strangers in our midst. We commission them today to learn, to grow and to teach about the modern day reality of loving the stranger.

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Reader: Jesus Christ, you too were an exile in the land of Egypt, estranged from your home and your culture. May your presence among us here show us that, as it says in *Ephesians*, you have torn down the dividing walls between us.

All: May we embrace the stranger, knowing we were once strangers too.

Hymn

"Cuando el Pobre" (The *Presbyterian Hymnal*, #407)

Installation

One: Today, as we commission you to learn and educate, we embrace our belief that the church and its members are called into the world to understand and work for reconciliation within our society. Indeed, our "Confession of 1967" states "The members of the church are emissaries of peace and seek the good of [humanity] in cooperation with powers and authorities in politics, culture, and economics. But they have to fight against pretensions and injustices when these same powers endanger human welfare. Their strength is in their confidence that God's purpose rather than (humanity)'s schemes will finally prevail" (*The Book of Confessions*, "The Confession of 1967," 9.25). We commission you today to an act of faith, to the work of education so that we as Presbyterian Women may join you as we toil to together so that God's purposes may prevail. In that light, I ask you these questions . . .

One: (*Insert Name*), do you pledge to hear the voices of our sisters and respond with compassion?

Participant: I do.

Do you commit yourself to work for the end of all violence?

Participant: I do.

One: Do you vow to advocate for the rights of women and children?

Participant: I do.

One: Do you promise to support our domestic partners?

Participant: I do.

One: Will you allow yourself to be transformed by this experience of partnership?

Participant: I will.

One: Then may the God of the Sojourner guide you through this wilderness that lies before you. May you know and learn the experience of the stranger, and become a stranger to and for yourself. May the pillar of fire and smoke lead you to see the Promised Land that lies before us as a community, and make you work to make our community reflect that same Promised Land.

All: Amen.

Prayer of Dedication*

(Preferably led by U.S.A. Mission Experience participant)

One: Let us pray together. Show me the suffering of the most miserable

All: So I will know my people's plight.

One: Free me to pray for others

All: For you are present in every person.

One: Help me to take responsibility for my own life

All: So that I can be free at last.

One: Grant me courage to serve others

All: For in service there is true life.

One: Give me honesty and patience

All: So that I can work with other workers.

One: Bring forth song and celebration

All: So that the spirit will be alive among us.

One: Let the spirit flourish and grow

All: So that we will never tire of the struggle.

One: Let us remember those who have died for justice

All: For they have given us life.

One: Help us love even those who hate us,

All: So that we may change the world. Amen.

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Hymn of Benediction

"Enviado Soy de Dios" (*Sing the Faith* #2184)