

An Invitation to Expanding Partnership in God's Mission

As members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) committed to God's mission, accompanied by global partners, we gathered together January 16-18, 2008 in Dallas, Texas. We acknowledge the rich Presbyterian heritage in world mission and reaffirm the Presbyterian understanding of God's mission as it is expressed in "Gathering for God's Future,"

The Good News of Jesus Christ is to be shared with the whole world. As disciples of Jesus Christ, each of us in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is sent into the world to join God's mission. As individuals and as a church, we are called to be faithful in this discipleship. Our mission is centered in the triune God. Our mission is God-called, Christ-centered and Spirit-led. Our mission is both proclamation and service; it is the reason the church exists...

Our renewed call from God is to face the challenges of witnessing and evangelizing worldwide, equipping the church for transforming mission, engaging in ministries of reconciliation, justice, healing and grace, and living the Good News of Jesus Christ in community with people who are poor, [persecuted, and living in the midst of violence]...

The church is part of God's plan. We are called into the community of the church, and we call new disciples into that community. With Christ as our head, the church community exists for the sake of God's mission. We learn to serve in mission in a way that is faithful to the triune God. We are to model the kind of community God intends for all humanity. To be the church is to be one large mission society.¹

Grounded in this theological foundation we realize that God is calling us to new patterns of mission. The world has changed, and the majority of the world's Christians are now in Latin America, Africa and Asia. The great growth and mission faithfulness of the Church outside the West invite us into a new posture. We must listen and learn to receive. We must also be open to new patterns of collaboration. These new patterns involve new cooperation and partnerships within the PC(USA).

I. We recognize that God calls us to mission that is grounded in confession of our sins, grows out of a life of prayer and is sustained in worship. Therefore, we covenant to live and serve together in God's mission according to the following **values**:

1. Trusting in the Holy Spirit and trusting in one another as each discerns how God is moving us in mission. (Acts 10)
2. Doing mission in the way of Jesus who humbled himself, showing the way of self-giving and self-emptying. (Philippians 2)
3. Seeking to be faithful to God as we live and proclaim the fullness of Jesus Christ's good news; personal witness to those outside the church, justice for the oppressed and compassion for those in need. We accompany others in their efforts to be faithful. (Luke 4)
4. Affirming the complementary nature of God's gifts to all in the one body of Christ and encouraging one another in living out those gifts. (I Corinthians 12)
5. Recognizing our responsibility to each other by communicating openly, acting transparently and speaking and hearing the truth in love. (Ephesians 4)

¹ PCUSA, "Gathering for God's Future: Witness, Discipleship, Community: A Renewed Call to Worldwide Mission," 2003, pp. 1, 16. Text in brackets is added.

6. Striving in our mission to be aware of the context out of which we come, to respect the persons with whom we labor and to honor the context in which they live. In an era of massive global inequalities we commit ourselves to be sensitive to and address the issues of power that result from our differences. (Philippians 2)

7. Valuing long-term relationships, partnerships characterized by perseverance and long-term commitments which support and encourage global partners. (I Thessalonians 2)

II. We seek to live out these mission values with humility, integrity and steadfastness. Recognizing that God invites us all to be full participants in God's mission, we commit ourselves to **work cooperatively** with one another in the following ways:

1. We will affirm and encourage World Mission as it continues to move from a regulatory role to a more enabling and equipping role.

2. We will celebrate and encourage diverse Presbyterian approaches and structures for mission while maintaining the unity of our participation in God's mission.

3. We will share responsibility for the education and preparation of all Presbyterians for mission.

4. We commit ourselves to seeking more mission personnel who will serve long-term in cross-cultural contexts through the PC(USA), and to supporting them fully.

5. We commit ourselves to enabling and supporting our global partners as they send their mission personnel in cross-cultural service.

6. We recognize and affirm the growing opportunity for cross-cultural mission in our own increasingly pluralistic and multi-cultural society, and we receive the global community from near and far as mission partners and God's gift to us. We seek increased integration between local and global mission.

III. As we move forward together in God's mission, we commit ourselves to calling the church to ongoing intercessory **prayer** for God's mission and to the following **tasks**:

1. We will form a Coordinating Committee to ensure that we will meet together to share and cooperate on a regular basis.

2. During the coming year we will work to address two immediate priorities:

a. to coordinate and collaborate in the sending of mission personnel.

b. to expand Presbyterian funding for mission personnel.

3. During the next three months we will share this document and invitation with our constituencies.

IV. With bold humility we **invite** those who would covenant with us to join in this new collaborative model of Presbyterian mission, and we ask for encouragement, for guidance and for prayer, remembering Jesus' own prayer:

The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:22-23)

We, the undersigned, as individuals, join in the covenant, and we will encourage the organizations we serve to affirm it as well. Signed this January 18, 2008.