

**ITEM C.108
FOR ACTION**

<i>FOR PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE USE ONLY</i>			
	A. Finance		E. Corporate Property, Legal, Finance
	B. Justice		F. PC(USA), A Corporation
X	C. Leadership		G. Audit
	D. Worshiping Communities		H. Executive Committee
			J. Board Nominating & Governance Subcommittee
			P. Plenary

Subject: Engaging with Presbyteries and Congregations in the Sending and Support of Mission Personnel

Recommendation:

That the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board approve the following recommendations to update the understanding of the engagement with presbyteries and congregations with respect to the following:

Identification and validation of positions for Mission Service:

1. Presbyterian World Mission (PWM) will continue to work in partnership with our global partners to develop requests for positions to be filled by called, committed and qualified Christians to meet their defined needs in alignment with PWM's strategic plan (Attachment 1), area strategy, and our church's understanding of mission.
2. PWM will receive proposals from presbyteries/congregations for positions that have been drafted in partnership with an existing partner of PWM. Criteria for validation will include but not be limited to the following:
 - a. The position will support PWM's strategic plan, the area strategy and our church's understanding of mission.
 - b. One or more of the three critical global initiatives (poverty alleviation, evangelism, and reconciliation) will clearly be addressed by the position.
 - c. To provide appropriate support for the position, it should be located in a country where PWM is programmatically engaged or has plans to be engaged and where a Regional Liaison (RL) is assigned to that country. If not, the Area Coordinator may work with the presbytery to propose a contingency plan where appropriate.
 - d. The position does not present administrative or logistical responsibilities beyond the capacity of PWM staff to support the position.

Funding Positions for Mission Service:

3. PWM will determine on an annual basis the number and location of mission worker positions that can be supported by the budget for the sending and support of mission personnel. Determination for continuation of support for existing personnel and the number of new appointments will be made annually.
4. A presbytery/congregation presenting a position for validation will need to submit the funds or pledges for funding in the amount of 80% for at least the first term (typically four years). A Memorandum of Understanding will be signed by the presbytery/congregation and PWM

to insure spiritual, programmatic, pastoral, financial and administrative support of the position.

5. Funding will be sent to the appropriate Presbyterian Mission Agency account for the administration of the sending and support cost of the person appointed to the position.

Persons Called to Mission Service:

6. Individuals are encouraged to engage in the discernment of a call to mission service through their presbytery/congregation and PWM by applying for the positions that are posted in One Door.
7. PWM no longer has the capacity to assist or facilitate the process for individuals seeking national mission service opportunities. Individuals seeking these types of mission opportunities should be encouraged to work with their presbytery/congregation to explore opportunities for service.

Deployment, Care, and Maintenance of Mission Personnel:

8. Presbyteries/Congregations are fundamental to the ongoing support and care of those serving in mission.
9. The Presbyterian Church (USA) A Corp, through PWM, will serve as the employer of record, responsible for the hiring, sending, management and care of mission workers serving in validated and funded positions. It is PWM's responsibility to administer policies for compensation and benefits for those individuals under appointment by the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA).
10. PWM staff and the global partner share in the overall task of orientation, language training, and oversight of the work while the global partner agency has responsibility for day-to-day supervision. Mission workers are evaluated annually by PWM staff and the global partner.

Recognition of Presbyterians in mission service not under Presbyterian Mission Agency appointment:

11. PWM will receive and post the names of the members of PC(USA) congregations and presbyteries serving in mission abroad for listing on a "Presbyterians Serving in International Contexts" website recognizing those who are serving in mission but are not under appointment by PWM. These names can be submitted from partner churches/organizations, presbyteries and congregations.
12. The organization requesting the inclusion of the name on the website will provide the following to PWM, this will be retained as part of our records:
 - a. Name and information on partner church/organization.
 - b. Job description.
 - c. Name of person serving in mission.
 - d. Documentation that the partner church/organization or presbytery has completed a background check on the person to be listed.
 - f. Endorsement of presbytery.

Background:

In 1994 the Task Force to Respond to the San Gabriel Overtures 92-30 and 92-31 (204th General Assembly) (Attachment 2) presented a report to the 206th General Assembly. The recommendations of that report were approved by the 206th General Assembly (GA Minutes, pp. 75-76 and 246-249). The report set up a process by which presbyteries could have a greater role in the recruitment and appointment of mission personnel. After a review of the task team's report documents we believe that what is mandated does not relate to current realities.

Since 1994 the involvement of presbyteries and congregations in international mission has continued to change. Through a partnership model Presbyterian World Mission (PWM) continues to seek ways to work together with presbyteries and congregations to respond to the requests from our global partner churches/organizations for engagement in ministry through the sending of mission personnel. See attached Presbyterians Do Mission In Partnership Policy adopted by the 215th General Assembly (2003) (Attachment 3).

In recent years PWM has developed a strategic plan in collaboration with presbyteries, congregations, and global partners helping us focus our engagement through faithful and effective models of mission and ministry.

PWM continues to work with our global partners as they identify needs and develop requests for mission personnel to fill these positions. We receive more requests than we have the capacity to fill each year. PWM also continues to seek the engagement of presbyteries and congregations in the sending and support of mission personnel. As we work to strengthen our relationships and develop strong *communities of mission practice* we look for ways to be responsive together. A *community of mission practice* is a space where PC(USA) members, global partners and World Mission (including mission personnel) commit to interact regularly to learn and grow as a community; come together to share an identity derived from a common mission passion; are guided and shaped by the practices of prayer, Bible study, reflection and worship.

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION STRATEGIC DIRECTION

THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

As members of the Church of Jesus Christ, we believe in and trust in the Triune God: the steadfast love and grace of God, the redemptive and reconciling work of Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world, and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. As an entity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and part of the Reformed tradition, we understand ourselves to be part of the larger Body of Christ in the world, the ekklesia: we are called, led and empowered by the Holy Spirit to walk together with God and each other in covenant relationship as we participate in God's mission in the world God so loved and loves (The Book of Order, G3.0000-0401, "The Church and Its Mission").

STRATEGIC STATEMENTS

VISION STATEMENT

God's people connected in effective mission: a compelling witness to Jesus Christ in a globalized world.

MISSION STATEMENT

To engage with U.S. Presbyterians and global partners for faithful and effective participation in God's mission in a globalized world, growing together as communities of mission practice.

CORE VALUES

Dignity

Created in God's image and forgiven by God in Christ, we are all called to treat each person with dignity and respect, following the model of Jesus, standing together with those who are marginalized.

Empowerment

We will focus on long-term relationships, building the capacity of each member of the Body of Christ to engage in God's mission in sustainable ways. We will strive to be aware of issues of power and context as well as the gifts and hopes of others.

Holistic Ministry

We seek to bring about the realization of God's vision for our fallen world: the redemption of the whole creation, including both personal sinfulness and the unjust structures of society. A Christ-centered proclamation of the gospel requires that we share the gospel through evangelism, minister in compassion, and advocate for justice.

Partnership

Our work with partner churches and organizations around the world and with U.S. Presbyterians is based on mutual respect and trust leading to common prophetic witness and to mutual transparency and accountability. Whenever possible, we work in God's mission with other members of the ecumenical family and with partners of other faiths.

Relevance to God's World

We embrace the call of God to respond with creativity and integrity to a rapidly changing and interdependent world where local and global concerns converge in new ways. We will maintain our centeredness in Christ as we follow the example of our spiritual ancestors: "The church reformed, always reforming" (Book of Order G-2.0200).

Stewardship

From the beginning God has called humankind to care for the created order; therefore we will strive to restore God's creation and to use its resources respectfully and responsibly. We, as individuals and as an organization, with all that we have belong to God; therefore we place under the Lordship of Christ our time, talents, and financial resources; our political and economic choices; our relationships; and our very lives.

DIRECTIONAL GOALS

Communities of Mission Practice

Presbyterian World Mission, in collaboration with U.S. Presbyterians and global partners, will inspire, equip and accompany each other in communities of mission practice to engage in God's mission.

Faithful and Effective Mission

Presbyterian World Mission will increase faithfulness and effectiveness in our shared participation in God's mission as we learn and act together with U.S. Presbyterians and global partners.

Strategic Engagement in Critical Global Issues

Presbyterian World Mission, in partnership with U.S. Presbyterians and global partners, will strategically focus on critical global issues that adversely affect God's creation and the human family.

Achieving Organizational Excellence

Presbyterian World Mission, as a learning community, will achieve organizational excellence through resource and knowledge management, strategic thinking, staff development and healthy work-life balance.

COMMUNITY OF MISSION PRACTICE CONCEPT PAPER

Presbyterian World Mission

February 2010

Historical Background

Beginning in 1837, the Presbyterian Church's Board of Foreign Mission sent mission workers into the world to preach, teach, and heal. Our mission workers worked in Brazil, Congo, Egypt, China, and other countries to plant the church and help it to grow into a witnessing, serving community. Thousands of women and men came to faith in Jesus Christ and the churches grew. This *direct mode* of mission was a good and faithful response to God's call to our church at that time.

In the 1950's and 60's, as Presbyterian communities in these nations multiplied and matured and as the developing world's clamor for self-determination in the waning years of the age of colonialism grew, our church discerned a movement of the Spirit and reformed its mission policy to recognize and respect the role of national Christian communities and their leaders in the nations we had considered to be "the mission field".

PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY BOARD

February 5-7, 2014

World Mission Ministry Area

Item C.108

Attachment 1

Our more *direct mode* of mission to communities around the world was transformed into an *equipping mode* of work, focused in large part on empowering the national churches to grow in membership, leadership and capacity to serve their communities through ministries of education, health, development, and evangelism. The PC(USA) was one of the early pioneers in working in *partner-ship* with national Christians and the results have been a noteworthy growth in membership, leadership and capacity, as well as a powerful multiplier effect that resulted from shifting the work of our mission workers from an exclusive focus on direct feeding, healing and proclamation to equipping the local church to feed, heal and proclaim the Gospel. This paradigmatic shift from the direct mode of mission to working in partnership characterized by mutuality was not an easy one. But the fruits of the last half century of mission in partnership have proven that our forbearers rightly discerned the Spirit's call.

Today, we believe the Spirit is calling our church to a deeper understanding of partnership. As globalization has increased international communication, travel and awareness and seen the convergence of global and local concerns, U.S. Presbyterians have responded by increasing their participation in international mission. If, in 1960, Presbyterians worked primarily through one, centralized international mission agency (COEMAR in the UPCUSA and the Board of Foreign Mission in the PCUS), today there are thousands of Presbyterian "mission agencies" making mission decisions every day: the Validated Mission Support Groups and other Presbyterian mission organizations, presbytery international partnerships, congregational mission committees, congregation-to-congregation "twinning" relationships, etc. This seismic shift in the understanding and practice of mission has opened the door to direct involvement of U.S. Presbyterians at unprecedented levels. Greatly increased involvement and giving and the opportunity for personal and congregational transformation have been some of the positive effects of the change. But our global partners note that our mission efforts have become highly uncoordinated and, in some cases, less responsive to the needs as perceived by the local community.

This shift, from one highly centralized agency to thousands of highly decentralized agencies, is a massive one and invites Presbyterian World Mission to reform its self-understanding and the focus of its work to include many U.S. Presbyterian mission constituents—congregations, middle governing bodies, validated mission support groups and other mission organizations-- as partners in mission, and to continue its commitment to engaging in God's mission in a spirit of humility and mutuality. This deep change invites us all to consider new ways of being a connectional church.

In the last century, our church did an excellent job of including the voice of global partners in our mission reflection and action. The new context requires that, in addition to maintaining our close and mutual partnership with global partners (because we believe that God speaks with particular clarity to God's people in each place) and ecumenical partners (because of our understanding of the linkage between mission and unity), we are called to discern and engage in God's mission with U.S. Presbyterians.

The Dallas Invitation, signed by 64 mission leaders from across the PC(USA) and affirmed by the GAC and General Assembly in 2008, affirms this movement and invites Presbyterian World Mission to support "new patterns involving new cooperation and partnerships within the PC(USA)". In order to accomplish this deepening of partnership in mission, Presbyterian World Mission proposes to work intentionally in "communities of mission practice", creating and nurturing spaces of prayer, reflection, discernment and discipleship which transcend national borders and allow global partners, U.S. Presbyterians and Presbyterian World Mission to come together as partners in God's mission. The concept is described below.

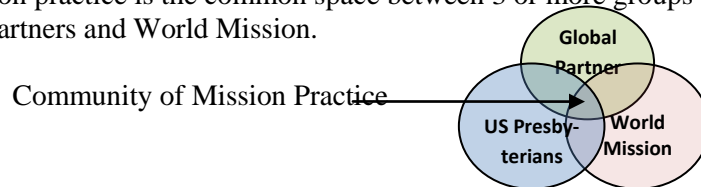
Conceptual Framework

While global partners and U.S. Presbyterians will maintain separate spaces of mission reflection and action, World Mission understands a community of mission practice to be the space where Presbyterians, global partners and World Mission come together. A community of mission practice shares an identity derived from a common passion. It commits to interact regularly to learn and grow as a community and is guided and shaped by the disciplines of prayer, Bible Study, reflection and worship. It includes diverse perspectives, working together toward a common purpose, sharing World Mission's core values, and developing a body of shared knowledge and practice in mission in order to increase the faithfulness and effectiveness of its participation in God's mission.

In summary, a community of mission practice...

- Commits to interact regularly to learn and grow as a community
- Shares World Mission's core values
- Shares an identity derived from a common passion
- Is guided and shaped by the disciplines of prayer, Bible study, reflection and worship
- Includes diverse perspectives toward a common purpose
- Develops a body of shared knowledge and practice in mission
- Moves effectively into a globalized world addressing issues around their common passion

Composition: The community of mission practice is the common space between 3 or more groups including U.S. Presbyterians, Global Partners and World Mission.



World Mission's particular role: World Mission is a member/part of a community of mission practice and plays a distinct role:

- provides servant leadership;
- leads from within;
- works in a community development model, honoring and strengthening the gifts of all;
- serves as a bridge across places and across time: connecting the community of mission practice with mission history and with the experiences of other mission constituencies and ecumenical and interfaith partners;
- Serves as repository of communities' institutional knowledge (growing body of mission reflection and practice).

From Minutes of the 206th GA (1994). Part 1 Journal pp 246-249

GENERAL ASSEMBLY COUNCIL

Background

30.202

This is in response to *Overture 92-30* and *Overture 92-31* from the Presbytery of San Gabriel.

30.203

In an effort to engage the denomination in discussions around decentralization of the recruitment and funding of mission personnel, the Presbytery of San Gabriel drafted two overtures presented to the 204th General Assembly (1992). The assembly authorized the Global Mission Ministry Unit and the Stewardship and Communication Ministry Unit to appoint a task force to respond to these overtures by the 206th General Assembly (1994).

30.204

Composed of representatives from seven presbyteries, three ministry units (Global Mission, Stewardship and Communication, and Church Vocations), and one overseas partner, the task force met three times over a one-year period.

30.205

Guidelines for initiating mission personnel recruitment and funding processes were drafted and shared with each presbytery and synod of the PC(USA) as well as with the various mission and funding networks. Focus groups, presbytery staff members, and individuals related to mission, funding, and placement were asked for input prior to the final draft.

Report of the Task Force to Respond to San Gabriel Overtures

30.206

These are days of exhilarating change, both in the world and in the PC(USA). For over 150 years, Presbyterians in the U.S.A. have given of their best and brightest to fulfill Christ's call to "[g]o into all the world and proclaim the good news . . ." (Mark 16:15). Although the gospel's mandate to reach out remains constant, the "world" to which Jesus referred is in continuing flux. Our culture is changing, as are the many cultures that receive our mission personnel.

30.207

A generation ago, our denomination adapted its system of sending mission personnel to accommodate the reality of the global mission field at that time. "Mission churches" had matured into fully functioning bodies of believers who were able to direct their own destinies and to engage in their own mission programs. Recognizing this historic change, our church led the way into a new and responsive era of partnership in mission. Thus, we adjusted the manner in which we acknowledge Christ's unchanging command and now send our mission personnel in close consultation with our overseas partners.

30.208

A similar transformation is now taking place at the local levels within our church. As the world grows smaller and as Presbyterians travel more extensively, we are coming into broader contact

with Christian churches outside our own borders and thus with mission opportunities around the world. The wisdom and vision gained from these contacts seeks expression within our denomination's mission enterprise. As today's proactive Presbyterians seek a central role in shaping the mission direction of the PC(USA), we can anticipate a new and thrilling era of partnership--an era in which mission priorities and programs will be developed and implemented in close consultation with local partner congregations and presbyteries.

30.209

At this crossroad in the life of the PC(USA), our colleagues throughout the denomination agree that there is a need for a common set of understandings about the recruitment and funding of mission personnel and the establishment of partnerships among presbyteries, congregations, General Assembly agencies, and churches in other countries. Further, they advise that, while partnership in certain decisions and processes is important, the General Assembly must remain the nucleus for international mission coordination, strategy, evaluation, deployment of personnel, and disbursement of funds.

30.210

The intent of this report is to respond to the overtures from the Presbytery of San Gabriel with a system of recruitment, funding, and continuing involvement that maximizes the flexibility for individuals seeking mission appointments, as well as congregations wishing to directly participate in the support of specific mission projects and personnel.

30.211

Beyond the excitement of emerging possibilities, our Reformed understanding of "call" weaves its faithful way through all that is new and creative. As Presbyterians pursue their call to mission service, they are nurtured and shaped by the Spirit speaking through the voices of the local, national, and international church.

Positions, Persons, and Funding for Mission Service

30.212

When and where are the points of entry into the process? What needs to happen at which level to identify people and positions? What are the funding opportunities? Who has the responsibility for supervision, orientation, and ongoing support?

30.213

To answer these questions, it is necessary to examine the processes of validating positions for mission service, identifying people called to service, and securing funds to support people and positions.

a. Identification and Validation of Positions for Mission Service

30.214

The church of Jesus Christ in any particular place is, and must be, the primary agent of mission in that location. It is this affirmation that informs the partnership process for the identification and validation of mission service positions. In general, requests for specific personnel needs will be made by Christian entities who are working locally whether in the U.S.A. or internationally.

30.215

There are several appropriate avenues for determining needs and positions for mission service:

30.216

(1) An international partner church or institution may identify a needed position and request personnel through the area or program offices of the Worldwide Ministries Division.

30.217

(2) A presbytery, church, mission, or community agency may request personnel for a position through the National Ministries Division.

30.218

(3) An individual may be invited to serve in a specific position and make contact with his or her congregation, presbytery, and the Worldwide Ministries Division, or the National Ministries Division to apply for placement, recognition, or support by the PC(USA).

30.219

(4) A group or individual working or planning to work with a mission organization not currently in an established partnership with the PC(USA), may explore the possibility of establishing a formal mission relationship with the PC(USA).

30.220

(5) A group or individual may propose that a ministry to those who have not heard the gospel be validated where there is no church entity with which to establish a partnership.

30.221

Once a service need is identified, the position is defined and a process of "validation" takes place. This process determines the scope of the work, the duration of the project, the skills needed, the working and living environments, supervision, job expectations, and estimates of additional program costs. Before appropriate validation can be completed such questions may be asked as:

- Is this position strategic for witness of the gospel in this place?
- Does the filling of this position with a PC(USA) person place local Christians in physical or political danger?
- Does filling this position replace local people with similar skills who are available to be hired?

30.222

The appropriate offices of the divisions are responsible to consult with the necessary parties to assist in determining the validity and viability of each position request.

b. Funding Positions for Mission Service

30.223

When a position is considered "valid" by all affected parties, it is prioritized so that available funding can be determined. (No person is deployed through the PC (USA) without a plan for full financial support to cover the duration of his or her appointment.)

PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY BOARD

February 5-7, 2014

World Mission Ministry Area

Item C.108

Attachment 2

30.224

Possible funding sources for the position vary with the nature, location, and priority of a national church or a PC(USA) area mission strategy. Funding options may include, but are not limited to the following:

30.225

(1) A limited number of newly validated positions will be prioritized each year to receive full funding through General Assembly Unified Funds. This number will differ annually with changes in budget, amounts available from unified mission moneys, the retirement or completion of terms for other personnel, and the pattern of service appropriate to the position.

30.226 [For assembly action see pp. 70, 75-76.]

(2) ~~[For validated positions initiated at the request of qualified candidates for mission service up to 80 percent of the total support may be raised by that individual and his own presbytery or congregation.]~~ [When a position has been validated and a candidate for that position has been approved, the appropriate General Assembly division may authorize the candidate to secure up to 80 percent of the total support required for full term of appointment, with assurance that the appointment will be made unless changing circumstances make it impossible.] These funds should represent "new dollars" rather than moneys shifted from other Presbyterian causes. The additional local funds will be supplemented by available General Assembly Unified Funds as mutually agreed-upon by the funding sources.

30.227

(3) Joint appointments with other agencies or denominations may be made through negotiations to share the costs of a validated position.

30.228

(4) Some schools, hospitals, and most U.S.A. mission sites share in the cost of housing, salary, or local stipends. Recruitment, orientation, travel, and other costs may be shared by congregation, by presbytery, or by General Assembly through designated or unified moneys.

30.229

(5) Short-term volunteer positions are funded from personal moneys, gifts, and/or scholarships from congregations and presbyteries. For volunteer positions over one year, the funding package is negotiated with the individual, the General Assembly Mission Volunteer Office, and the congregations or presbytery participating in the appointment.

30.230

Where funding for people in mission is provided by congregations, presbyteries; and individuals, it is the General Assembly that receives, acknowledges, and appropriately directs these designated funds. Sponsoring congregations and presbyteries have the responsibility for making regular payments through the General Assembly for the agreed-upon term of the appointment.

c. Persons Called to Mission Service

30.231

Individuals desiring to serve the PC(USA) in mission service have the primary responsibility to discern God's will for their lives and their call to service through personal reflection, consultation with friends and pastors and with the session or leadership of their home church.

30.232

Once the individual determines that mission service may be the appropriate avenue to respond to God's call to serve, an inquiry phase begins. There are two ways to initiate this phase:

30.233

(1) The individual may contact the Mission Personnel Recruitment Office or the Churchwide Personnel Service Office of the General Assembly Council. The individual will be sent information regarding U.S.A. and international mission opportunities and funding options.

30.234

(2) The individual may contact his or her home presbytery and express interest in mission service. The presbytery that is participating in the recruitment and/or funding process, will link the individual with the presbytery committee(s) whose concern is the assessment and placement of church professionals.

30.235

These two options differ only in the way in which the person is identified and assessed for mission service and, possibly, in the manner in which the position or individual is funded.

30.236

The person serving the church under either option is a full participant in the mission service of the PC(USA) and is subject to all of the expectations, rules, and perquisites that govern the actions of all the denomination's mission personnel.

30.237

Under the second option, the initiative lies with the individual. While decisions regarding the appropriateness of the position and its relationship to overall mission strategy remain with the Worldwide Ministries Division or the National Ministries Division, the individual may be a participant in the identification and validation of the position. The individual also must seek the position, complete General Assembly application procedures, and create a funding plan with their congregation and presbytery for the life of his or her term of service that conforms to the guidelines of the home presbytery or congregation and the General Assembly agencies (see Part Seven, Appendix F).

30.238

The individual is then subject to the judgment of the presbytery and the Worldwide Ministries Division or the National Ministries Division regarding suitability for mission service. If the candidate is rejected or finds the service opportunities offered unsatisfactory, she or he may call for a conference of the decision makers for an explanation and possible reconsideration.

30.239

Frequent contact with sponsoring individuals and congregations is an especially important part of this shared ministry. Direct relationships with one or more specific congregations may involve not only financial support, but also matters of shared news, hospitality, and pastoral care as well as recruitment of others for mission service.

30.240

Should it be necessary for the individual to be recalled, all of the parties in that decision shall consult with each other and the individual. The decision may be appealed; however, if it is upheld, the individual dismissed from service shall respect the final decision of the PC(USA), the international partners, and the presbyteries.

30.241

Election to mission service is to be celebrated. Together the candidate, the candidate's congregation, and the candidate's presbytery, plan for the commissioning, the continuance of regular prayer, and the welcoming home of those engaged in mission service.

2. *Deployment, Care, and Maintenance of Mission*

30.242

The deployment of mission personnel comes at the merging of the recognition of an individual's call, the definition and validation of a position meeting human need, and the assurance of secured funding to support the person for the life of the appointment.

30.243

The orientation, personal care, and Supervision of mission personnel once deployed to the field of service are complex tasks. The congregation and presbytery are important in the ongoing communication and care pattern for members serving in mission. The appropriate General Assembly offices administer policies for compensation and benefits while keeping the mission personnel informed of changes or relationships that affect their lives. It is the General Assembly staff and the placement partner who share in the task of orientation, language study, and job oversight while the on-site agency or partner has responsibility for day-to-day supervision.

30.244

With any combination of funding, recruitment, and placement options, the coordination of mission strategies for the PC (USA) remains the responsibility of the ministry divisions. This is true in the coordination of work within synods and presbyteries as well as the strategies for working with international partners of the PC(USA). Processes related to the deployment, compensation, and benefits of mission personnel appointed under the auspices of the PC(USA) are administered by the agencies of the General Assembly, whether the individuals are compensated or are volunteers serving nationally or internationally.

Presbyterians Do Mission in Partnership

215th General Assembly (2003) Policy Statement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Summary

As heirs to God's grace in Jesus Christ, and joint heirs with all who confess him Lord, we affirm our place as Presbyterians in the whole Body of Christ, the Church.

We understand "Mission" to be God's work for the sake of the world God loves. We understand this work to be centered in the Lordship of Jesus Christ and made real through the active and leading power of the Holy Spirit. Recognizing our human limitations and because of our fundamental unity in Jesus Christ, we believe we are called to mission through the discipline of partnership.

The practice of partnership guides our whole connectional church. It guides us individually as members, officers and pastors. It guides us collectively as congregations, presbyteries, synods, General Assembly ministries and related institutions.

In doing mission in partnership, we seek to be guided by certain principles:

1. Shared Grace and Thanksgiving.
2. Mutuality and Interdependence.
3. Recognition and Respect.
4. Open Dialogue and Transparency.
5. Sharing of Resources.

Statement

As heirs to God's grace in Jesus Christ, and joint heirs with all who confess him Lord, we affirm our place as Presbyterians in the whole Body of Christ, the Church. We give visible recognition of our belonging to one another as one denominational family. We give this recognition as Presbyterians through our connectional system of congregations, presbyteries, synods, General Assemblies and related institutions. The one table around which we gather is God's table and the one mission to which we are called is God's mission.¹

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) declares that wherever one part is engaged in God's mission, all are engaged.² Whenever and wherever one engages in that mission, one bears witness to the saving love of God in Jesus Christ. Through this love, empowered by the Holy Spirit, all are made one. This unity is a gift of God's grace that extends across cultural, linguistic, economic and other barriers that divide us within the Body of Christ and across the human family.

Mission

As Christians, we understand "Mission" to be God's work for the sake of the world God loves. We understand this work to be centered in the Lordship of Jesus Christ and made real through the active and leading power of the Holy Spirit. The "where" and "how" and "with whom" of mission is of God's

initiative, sovereign action, and redeeming grace. The message we are called to bear is the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ.

The PC(USA) claims responsibility for bearing the Good News in this way:

"The Church is called to be Christ's faithful evangelist

1. going into the world, making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all he has commanded;
2. demonstrating by the love of its members for one another and by the quality of its common life the new reality in Christ; sharing in worship, fellowship, and nurture, practicing a deepened life of prayer and service under the guidance of the Holy Spirit;
3. participating in God's activity in the world through its life for others by
 - healing and reconciling and binding up wounds,
 - ministering to the needs of the poor, the sick, the lonely and the powerless,
 - engaging in the struggle to free people from sin, fear, oppression, hunger and injustice,
 - giving itself and its substance to the service of those who suffer,
 - sharing with Christ in the establishing of his just, peaceable, and loving rule in the world." ³

Partnership

As Presbyterians, we recognize the Reformed tradition as one part of the larger Body of Christ, the Church. Other communions in the household of God have equally unique and valued places at the table of God's mission. Recognizing our human limitations and because of our fundamental unity in Jesus Christ, we believe we are called to mission in the discipline of partnership. We believe that doing mission in partnership broadens our awareness of how interconnected God's mission is at the local, national and global levels.

Jesus invites us as friends to follow his commandment of love and bear fruit that will last (John 15:12-17). Like Paul and Titus, we become partners with each other and with Christ in united and mutual service (II Corinthians 8:16-24). Guided by Christ's humility, we work to empty ourselves of all pride, power, sin, and privilege so that God may be glorified (Philippians 2:5-11). Within and beyond our connectional community, doing mission in such true partnership opens us to opportunities for mutual encouragement, mutual transformation, mutual service and mutual renewal.

The practice of partnership guides our whole connectional church. It guides us individually as members, officers and pastors. It guides us collectively as congregations, presbyteries, synods, General Assembly ministries and related institutions. Through prayer, humility and a mutual openness to one another, we develop a cooperative witness that exalts the Lord we serve.

The discipline of partnership assumes 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 so that God's work can be more faithfully accomplished. Theologically and biblically, partnership is based on the fundamental belief that God's love for the world is greater than any one church can possibly comprehend or realize.

Knowing the breadth of God's love for the world, we affirm that there are different forms of partnership with different patterns of cooperation. We may join around a common goal with other churches, with secular organizations or with other faith communities. In any case, work for the common good extends partnership — and the service of God's mission — to all people.

Principles of Partnership

In doing mission in partnership, we seek to be guided by certain principles:

1. **Shared Grace and Thanksgiving.** Partnership calls all partners to confess individual and collective failings, to seek forgiveness for complicity with powers of injustice, to repent from histories of shared exploitation, to move toward common celebration of Christ's sacrifice of reconciliation, and together to give thanks and praise to God for all gifts of grace and renewal.
2. **Mutuality and Interdependence.** Partnership calls for interdependence in which mutual aid comes to all, where mutual accountability resides, and no partner dominates another because of affluence or "expertise."
3. **Recognition and Respect.** Partnership calls all partners to respect other partners in Christ, and to recognize one another's equal standing before God.
4. **Open Dialogue and Transparency.** Partnership calls for open dialogue where a common discernment of God's call to mission is sought, where Scripture is the base for prophetic challenge, where local initiative is respected, where differences are meditated in a Christ-like manner, and where all partners are transparent with regard to their activities and support.
5. **Sharing of Resources.** Partnership calls for the sharing of all types of resources: human, cultural, financial and spiritual; especially including friendly conversation and faith-transforming life experiences.

Partnership Commitments

Doing mission in partnership, we commit to be guided by these principles both individually and collectively. In the spirit of candid evaluation, we commit to asking ourselves discerning questions. For each principle, certain approaches are suggested:

Shared Grace and Thanksgiving

- Is there courage to confess human sins and confront the forces which deny the abundant life God promises to all in Jesus Christ?
- Is God's forgiveness mutually shared in Jesus Christ?
- Does the community of partners join in thankful worship to celebrate God's gift of grace and renewal?

Mutuality and Interdependence

- Is each partner's self-reliance affirmed, with mutual giving and receiving?
- Is there space for all partners to be guided by self-determination?
- Beyond unhealthy dynamics of power and dependency, is there openness to new dynamics of mutual service and mutual renewal?

Recognition and Respect

- Is there recognition of the self-affirmed identities of each partner?
- Are the unique contexts of all partners recognized and respected?
- Are gifts and needs of all partners affirmed and respected?
- Are cultural differences being mediated with sincerity and in a Christ-like manner?

Open Dialogue and Transparency

- Is there local initiative in mission discernment and mission activity?
- Does God's Word shape us to lovingly confront one another's failings and prophetically challenge the world's systems of power and domination?
- Is there transparency with all partners about what is being done in mission, even if there is disagreement?

Sharing of Resources

- Do partners minister to and inspire one another, listen to and critique one another?
- Is there mutual accountability in the exchange of all resources, including human, cultural, financial and spiritual?
- In trusting relationship, have partners moved beyond two-way relationships into open mission networks and ever-expanding webs of mission relationships?

As heirs to God's grace in Jesus Christ and joint heirs with all who confess him Lord, we commit to wrestle with these questions. We look toward the promise of Christ. We count on the subtle power of the Holy Spirit to guide and limit us. We hope, standing firm in common praise to the Triune God, that our practice of partnership may be transformed; that our participation in the Missio Dei may more fully contribute to the abundant life that God promises all people and all creation.

Notes

¹ in Latin, Missio Dei

² Book of Order (G-9.0103)

³ Book of Order (G-3.0300)