

Doing Mission in Christ's Way
A Follow-up to the Mission Invitation
Created in a Mission Celebration '09 Workshop
October 23, 2009

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. We recognize further that God invites all of us to participate in God's mission. Therefore, we commit ourselves to work cooperatively with one another, and more than that, to assume a spirit of collaboration. For Presbyterians who enter into this new way of thinking and doing God's mission, the dictum continues to ring clear and true: We do mission in partnership.

As we move out into the world (across the street or to another country) together, our first step is a vow to call the church continually to intercessory prayer for mission. Together let us respond with heart, mind and body to 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]

With bold humility we now invite others to covenant with us as we encourage one another and seek God's guidance in all that we undertake as Christ's agents of reconciliation. We will be guided and instructed by the following values and practices.

Those who do mission in Christ's way . . .

Worship the triune God together and pray for one another (*Matthew 7, Acts 1*)

Sample Practices

- Spend time in prayer and discernment before and after planning your local or global mission
- Pray for your partners by name before, during and after local or global mission together
- Include times of worship and prayer with partners/hosts as a part of the schedule for any visit
- Plan to be with partners for worship in their congregations
- Develop long-term prayer partners

Participate in mutual discernment (*Acts 10*)

Sample Practices

- Participate in a PCUSA Mission Network focused on a common country, people group or issue
- Initiate collaboration with churches doing similar kinds of local or global mission or who are working with common partners (contact Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Presbyterian Hunger Program, Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, Medical Benevolence Foundation, entities cited in the PCUSA Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study, nearby presbytery execs, etc. for connections)
- Seek feedback from mission workers and partners on what cultural issues need to be considered to avoid problems during your time together
- Provide individual and team training prior to visiting a partner, and debrief during the trip and upon return
- Converse openly and honestly with local or global partners to shape the nature, leadership, and content of the partnership and its elements, especially visits and gifts

- Honor the idea that the primary responsibility for discerning God's call for the church in each place belongs with the local host partner
- Debrief with your mission partners before concluding a mission experience and assure them of appropriate follow up
- Remember that God has called the partner church to be Christ's body in that place and that you are a guest; when you leave, they will live with the consequences of your actions

Model self-giving and self-emptying mission (*Philippians 2, John 17*)

Sample Practices

- Focus local and global partnerships on the priority of relationships over projects
- Allow the partner to express their desires, their understanding of needs, and their strategies as you shape the nature and content of your mission
- Actively seek ways to learn from partners
- Make contributions in ways that strengthen your partners' organization, integrity and unity in the place where they live and serve
- Make financial contributions in consultation with official boards or committees of your partners, and not to individuals
- Be willing to express your own needs and allow your partner to minister to you

Approach ministry holistically (word/deed and evangelism/compassion/justice) (*Luke 4, Micah 6*)

Sample Practices

- Demonstrate locally and globally a concern for the poor, oppressed, invisible, and unreached
- Collaborate with global and local partners with grace
- Articulate an eagerness to share leadership with partners, local or global
- Observe and learn from global partners who have a more holistic vision of mission
- Support the partner in their ministry in ways that are appropriate for you both
- Consult with partners to determine advocacy needs and how to act on those needs
- Recognize and support the mission work of other groups in and beyond the PCUSA that complements your participation in holistic mission
- Seek additional partners, recognizing that no one group can do it all
- Study a mission book together to discern your church's outreach ministry calling and ensure a holistic approach
- Include role-playing in trip preparation so that for each anticipated ministry action, an opening for gospel-sharing and cultural sensitivity is recognized and acted upon.

Provide mutual encouragement that honors different gifts in ministry (*1 Corinthians 12, Romans 1*), **and recognize our interdependence and the need for mutual transformation** (*1 Cor. 12, John 15, Romans 12*)

Sample Practices

- Look up PC(USA) mission workers who are serving in areas where you are visiting; share a meal and encourage them
- Receive graciously the gifts, meals and invitations your partners offer
- Recognize and appreciate the gifts of each partner and strategize together, especially when shaping the nature and content of a mission trip
- Leave your comfort zone; be adaptable and flexible
- Share deepest beliefs through the arts, forms other than the spoken or written word
- Stay in touch with your local and global partners throughout the year, affirming each other's gifts
- Invite each other to visit
- Open yourself to the transformation of your lifestyle and attitudes

Communicate openly; act transparently; and be mutually accountable (*Ephesians 4*)

Sample Practices

- Work to communicate honestly, openly and humbly as you and your local or global partner identify the actual needs in an area/country/cause
- Invite the insight and collaboration of relevant mission initiators and keep them informed of what you are doing, e.g., Validated Mission Support Groups, PC(USA) offices and other Presbyterian-related nonprofits involved with the same area or people
- Develop good listening skills
- Draft a covenant of understanding together, one that also provides for on-going mutual evaluation
- Communicate in advance about expectations related to financial gifts (what to do if an unexpected need arises, if the project changes, if there is surplus money, etc.)
- Clarify assumptions about what constitutes good communication and methods of mutual accountability
- Share financial reports on all gifts with partners, mission workers, PC(USA) offices and donors
- Designate a representative from each partner to serve as the “official” channel for communications about partnership matters

Are aware of our own context (*Philippians 2*); **work to understand cross-cultural realities including the context of those with whom we labor** (*Phil. 2, Deuteronomy 24*); **respect the dignity, gifts and resources of the partners** (*Phil. 2*); **and are sensitive to the issues of power that come from global inequities** (*Phil. 2, Jeremiah 9*)

Sample Practices:

- Spend time learning about the culture and socio-economic context of those with whom we want to partner
- Seek to listen to the voices of and follow the lead of the people closest to the ground with the most knowledge of the situation
- Engage in language learning with an eye toward immersing yourself in the local community
- Learn the communication styles of the community, not limited to language
- Be aware of the harm that some gifts can cause, including generating relationships of unhealthy dependency, divisions of churches, and jealousies
- Ask local or global partners to respond honestly to the hard questions: “How can we help?” and “How can we do no harm?” and “What are our weaknesses and failures?”

Value and build long-term relationships of trust (*I Thessalonians 2*)

Sample Practices:

- Value the role of long-term mission workers
- Pray for PC(USA) mission workers, financially support and personally encourage them
- Collaborate with long-term mission workers with grace and a willingness to share leadership
- Work collaboratively to increase funding for long-term mission workers
- Take time to build cross-cultural friendships both locally and globally
- Focus your partnership on long-term relationships that facilitate deep personal change
- Organize repeat short mission trips to the same location and with the same partner
- Take intentional steps to build trust with other workers in the mission field