

**ITEM P.002
FOR ACTION**

<i>FOR PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE USE ONLY</i>					
	A. Audit		E. Executive Committee		I. Ministerial Teams
	B. Personnel & Nominating		F. Resource Allocation & Stewardship	X	P. Plenary
	C. Property/Legal		G. Nurture the Body		
	D. PC(USA), A Corporation		H. Outreach to the World		

Subject: Mission Work Plan Advisory Task Force Report

Recommendation:

The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve the following 2019-2020 Mission Work Plan for the Presbyterian Mission Agency:

**Presbyterian Mission Agency
2019-20 Mission Work Plan**

Call

*Sing to God a new song; Sing to God, all the earth.
Sing and give praise to God's name;
Tell the glad news of salvation from day to day. – Psalm 96:1-2*

Bound together by the Grace of God, the Love of Christ and the movement of the Holy Spirit, the Presbyterian Mission Agency is called to “sing to God a new song,” a song that bears witness to God’s abiding love made manifest in the life of Jesus Christ and gathers us together for the Holy Spirit’s equipping. Let us worship the Triune God in our daily lives through the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Hymn of Praise

All that we have, all that we are, comes from you, dear God, our Creator. We thank you for your steadfast love.

All that we are called to be, comes from you, Jesus, our brother and our guide. and abiding presence in our lives.

All that summons and sanctifies us, comes from you, Holy Spirit, our comforter and cleanser.

We praise you O God, Holy One, Holy Three.

Confession

Gracious and merciful God, we come before you to confess the ways that we have not been faithful to you or to one another.

In humility and with a contrite spirit, we admit that:

- we ignore your call to us to be stewards of your creation and all that is in it. We are guided by scarcity, forgetting or refusing to see the many precious gifts you set before us each and every day.

- we put our own self-interest ahead of the needs of your church and work to advance our own agendas rather than seeking to work in partnership with colleagues in ministry across the church.
- we turn a blind eye to the systemic brokenness of the world and the church, poverty, white supremacy and structural racism; systems that oppress and destroy members of our human family, created in your image.
- we allow fear to overcome and paralyze us and we are unable to follow Christ, who said, “Fear not, for I am with you always.”

Compassionate and loving God, in Jesus Christ you make all things new. Forgive us. Transform our weak spirits and fearful hearts. Give us ears to hear and hearts to listen to the new songs that are welling up within and beyond the church. Give us courage to follow you so that we may become witnesses to your saving love and your call to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with you.

Assurance of Pardon

The God who challenges us is also the God who encourages us.

The God who confronts us is also the God who accepts us.

We can be assured that God is with us even now, accepting, guiding, and forgiving.

Thanks be to God!

The Word

Matthew 25:31-46

At the appointed time the Promised One will come in glory, escorted by all the angels of heaven, and will sit upon the royal throne with all the nations assembled below. Then the Promised One will separate them from one another, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. The sheep will be placed on the right hand, the goats on the left, “The ruler will say to those on the right, ‘Come, you blessed of my Abba God! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world! for I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me; naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me; in prison and you came to visit me.’ Then these just will ask, ‘When did we see you hungry and feed you, or see you thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you as a stranger and invite you in, or clothe you in your nakedness? When did we see you ill or in prison and come to visit you?’ The ruler will answer them, ‘The truth is, every time you did this for the least of my sisters or brothers, you did it for me. Then the ruler will say to those on the left, ‘Out of my sight you accursed ones! Into that everlasting fire prepared for the devil and the fallen angels! I was hungry and you gave me no food; I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink. I was a stranger and you gave me no welcome; naked and you gave me no clothing. I was ill and in prison and you did not come to visit me.’ Then they in turn will ask, ‘When did we see you hungry or thirsty, or homeless or naked, or ill or in prison, and not take care of you? The answer will come, ‘The truth is, as often as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me.

They will go off to eternal punishment, and the just will go off to eternal life.”

— The Inclusive Bible: First Egalitarian Version.
The Priests for Equality, Sheed and Ward, 2007.

The 222nd General Assembly (2016), of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) calls us to a “moment of great opportunity for our church. Momentum is building within our denomination and throughout our society to courageously confront the challenges of our time. A new civil rights movement, a new peace movement, a new economic justice movement is on the rise and we are in a position to stand in solidarity with the poor in a uniquely powerful way. It is a time for us to define who we will be for decades to come. May we choose to be a church committed to the gospel of Matthew 25.

“ . . . We see the Spirit blowing through our society, bringing to fruition seeds of peace and justice long dormant. The harvest will be plentiful. Let us heed the call to service, and recommit ourselves to the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in deeds as well as in words.”

Invitation to Discipleship

*I appeal to you, therefore, members of one family in Christ,
and by the mercies of God,
to present your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and acceptable to God,
which is your spiritual worship.
Do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your minds,
so that you may discern what is the will of God,
what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Affirmation of Faith

Discerning the signs of the times and responding to the action of the 222nd General Assembly (2016) as it approved the Confession of Belhar, we boldly proclaim that:

We believe in the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who gathers, protects and cares for the church through Word and Spirit. This God has done since the beginning of the world and will do to the end. We believe in one holy, universal Christian church, the communion of saints called from the entire human family.

We believe that Christ's work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another.

We believe that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ.

We believe that through the working of God's Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought.

We believe that this unity must become visible so that the world may believe that separation, enmity, and hatred between people and groups is sin.

We believe that anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the church and must be resisted.

We believe that true faith in Jesus Christ is the only condition for membership of this church.

Therefore, we reject any doctrine that absolutizes natural diversity in such a way that this hinders or breaks the visible and active unity of the church.

We reject any doctrine that professes that this spiritual unity is truly being maintained in the bond of peace while believers are alienated from one another and in despair of reconciliation.

We reject any doctrine that denies that a refusal earnestly to pursue this visible unity as a priceless gift is sin.

We reject any doctrine that maintains that descent or any other human or social factor should be a consideration in determining membership of the church.

We believe that, in obedience to Jesus Christ, its only head, the church is called to confess and to do all these things, even though the authorities and human laws might forbid them and punishment and suffering be the consequence.

We believe that Jesus is Lord. To the one and only God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be the honor and the glory for ever and ever.

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Unity, Reconciliation, and Justice:

A Study Guide for the Belhar Confession.

David Alexander. Used with permission.

The Offering

All that we are and all that we have comes from God. God calls us to be stewards of the gifts entrusted to us to work in partnership with our colleagues from other agencies, mid-councils and congregations to become a “Matthew 25 Church,” committing ourselves to ongoing directional goals with specific emphases for 2019-2020:

• Evangelism & Discipleship

Grow, proclaim and live out our faith in Jesus Christ by working with our partners, here and around the world, to build communities that witness to the gospel of Christ’s love for the rich diversity reflected in all humankind.

2019-2020 Emphases:

- Congregational Vitality, where churches prioritize faithfulness over self-sufficiency;
- Poverty, where the denomination fights unjust economic systems perpetuating destitution and need.

• Leader Formation

Seek, develop and energize diverse leaders who are answering God’s call to equip the Church to be a welcoming place of worship, mission and spiritual nurture for all of God’s children, especially those who have been marginalized.

2019-2020 Emphasis:

- Structural Racism/White Supremacy, where Presbyterians dismantle structures and ideologies oppressing people of color;

• Justice & Reconciliation

Galvanize the church to act on issues of racism, violence and poverty as a prophetic witness to Christ’s transforming justice by speaking and living out God’s truth and compassion as we call ourselves and the world to account for injustice and oppression.

2019-2020 Emphasis:

- Poverty, where the denomination fights unjust economic systems perpetuating destitution and need;
- Structural Racism/White Supremacy, where Presbyterians dismantle structures and ideologies oppressing people of color

The Benediction

Now to the One who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine,

To this One be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Rationale

The General Assembly has directed the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through the Organization for Mission, to “*develop and propose, for General Assembly approval, the mission directions, goals, objectives, and priorities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency; doing so by taking into account the mission work being done by sessions, presbyteries, and synods, and to propose for General Assembly approval an accompanying budget that will implement the mission work plan of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.*”

The Presbyterian Mission Agency fulfills this directive through presentation of the accompanying

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February 7-9, 2018

Mission Work Plan Advisory Task Force

Mission Work Plan and a Budget for approval. In recent years, the Mission Work Plan covered a four-year period, while budgets were recommended to the General Assembly biennially. In 2016, acknowledging transitions in leadership for the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the beginning of national discussions regarding denominational focus and possible agency reorganization, the General Assembly approved a two year “interim” Mission Work Plan for 2017-2018.

Through interim leadership in the office of the executive director and initiatives undertaken by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, the last two years have provided renewed focus under three directional goals: Evangelism and Discipleship; Servant Leader Formation; and Justice & Reconciliation. The mission work plan for 2017-2018 introduced a theological framework centered around the great ends of the church, and invited all of those engaging the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency to joyfully center the work of God in Jesus Christ as our shared calling. The accompanying budget addressed ongoing revenue trends and proposed expenditures under these shared criteria.

In the spring of 2017, the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board established a Mission Work Plan Advisory Task Force of elected board members to work alongside agency staff in developing the next Mission Work Plan. Work initially included an evaluation of the existing 2017-2018 mission work plan, a survey of board members, and conversation with senior staff and leadership cabinet members during the Board Executive Committee Retreat. The survey revealed substantial support for the theological frame for the Mission Work Plan as well as the formulation of the directional goals, with some suggestions for improvement.

The resignation of the Interim Executive Director in the fall of 2017 temporarily interrupted progress toward revising the mission work plan, which was then resumed by the Acting Executive Director several weeks later.

The announcement that the search for an installed Executive Director would be temporarily suspended led to our decision to propose another two-year “interim” mission work plan for 2019-2020. We believe that installed leadership should be allowed to oversee the establishment of a four-year work plan, ideally during a time of renewed denominational vitality and stability following the work of the General Assembly through the reports of the Way Forward Commission and 2020 Vision Committee.

Staff proposed a more expansive theological vision for the mission work plan, placing the directional goals as an offering to the church within the context of a reformed worship service. It is believed that this format can find multiple practical uses, promoting mission alignment within worship and devotional experiences inside the agency. This is meant to be a Mission Work Plan that will be used extensively. Call and Confession, Word and Affirmation provide familiar rhythms for experiencing the presence of God within our common mission, an expression of contrition for shortcomings, and the assurance that God’s presence moves within and throughout even so. Interpreting Matthew 25 through the newly adopted *Confession of Belhar* provides depth and texture to the directional goals, highlighting particular emphases that these goals suggest for this time in the life of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. As with the previous Mission Work Plan, for 2019-2020 program areas will be asked to be guided by all three directional goals. The directional goals themselves remain substantially the same under this version of the Mission Work Plan, but this new framework is intended to provide a richer understanding of those goals and a reaffirmation of the centrality of God’s mission in our work together.

This Mission Work Plan remains more limited in scope, and will serve as an interim work plan over the next 2-3 year period, in light of transitions in leadership for the Presbyterian Mission Agency and conversations regarding agency consolidation. It is flexible enough to enable staff to respond nimbly to General Assembly directives but specific enough to help give intention and focus to mission decisions.

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The worship frame for this Mission Work Plan required the removal of overt Vision, Mission, and Core Value statements. It is not the intention of either staff or the Mission Work Plan Advisory Task Force that these be abandoned, but they are not seen as essential for the purpose of this document. If it is the will of the Board or the General Assembly, these may be reaffirmed through appending them or adopting them in another place.

Conclusion

The General Assembly will consider several action items that will have impact on the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. It is impossible to know in advance where these proposals, and the Assembly's discernment, will lead. Whatever the outcome, the Mission Agency will need strategic direction and a budget for the next two-year period. The 2019-2020 Mission Work Plan is intended to provide direction for that interim period, ensuring continuity with what has gone before, while being open to the movement of God's Spirit in the years ahead.