



*A Theological
Approach to Mission
in The United
Methodist Church*

**FOR ALL
THE RIGHT
REASONS**

Leader's Guide

For All the Right Reasons
A Theological Approach to Mission in The United Methodist Church

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Produced by

Southeaster Jurisdiction Conference Mission Secretaries
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Acknowledgements

Contents

Overview

With the technological advances during the 20th and 21st centuries, mission activity has increased. Faster and more efficient communication, more accessible and affordable travel coupled with a continued desire among Christians to “go into all the world” have brought faraway countries closer than ever before.

Much emphasis has been placed on doing the work of mission in the world. Unfortunately, not as much emphasis has been placed on developing a biblical/theological understanding of why we are doing the work of mission. The Southeastern Jurisdiction Conference Secretaries of Global Ministries has increasingly felt the need to provide a tool to educate and provide a solid foundation for mission in The United Methodist Church.

For All the Right Reasons is a cumulative effort by the Conference Mission Secretaries of the Southeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church designed to provide local congregations, districts and conferences with a teaching tool enabling persons to understand the biblical/theological reasons for mission involvement.

The study strives to engage participants into searching for the answers to these basic questions:

- Who are we and the people with whom we are ministering?
- Why do we do mission work?
- How do we do mission work effectively?

This guide along with a PowerPoint presentation has been developed to allow any mission-minded person to lead a group in discovering a deeper understanding of mission and missions. It can be used in several different formats using the basic six-session leader’s guide provided. Each person leading this study is free to adapt, delete or add in order to best address the needs of his/her particular audience.

Ways this Resource Can Be Used

VIM team/individual training
Mission Committees
District/Conference Mission Training
Sunday School classes
Mission weekends
Mission Studies
UMW Meetings
Church Council or equivalent
Visioning /Planning Groups

Formats/Settings

Multi-Session Study (i.e. Sunday School Classes)
1-2 hour study
Daylong study
Weekend Retreat

Suggestions for combining the six sessions into one workshop are offered in Appendix A.

Using the Leader's Guide

This leader's guide is formatted with directions (in regular typeface) and talking points (*in bold italic typeface*) on the right side of each page with corresponding PowerPoint slides pictured on the left side. PowerPoint slide changes occur at the point where slides are pictured on the page.

Leaders are free to adapt directions and talking points to fit particular situations. Also, adding personal stories can help illustrate the points made in the presentation. Be creative and have fun!

Session 1

INTRODUCTION

Session 1 invites participants to explore motivations for mission involvement and the impact upon the ministry of mission.



Group Introductions & Group Building

(if needed)

Begin with an Ice Breaker to introduce group members to one another and to build community. Ideas are offered in Appendix B.

Opening Worship

Place a pillar candle in a prominent location in the room creating a focal point. Make the room as dark as you can possibly make it. If you are using projection equipment, turn it off for this part of the session. The goal is to make it so dark that when the candle is lighted a noticeable difference in light levels is detected.

Give each participant a candle that will be lighted later in the meditation.

Light the pillar candle and read Matthew 5:14-16.

Share the following meditation or create your own:

Have you ever been in a completely dark room where you saw nothing but blackness? Not even a pinpoint of light from a crack in the door?

Have you ever noticed when a candle is lighted or a small penlight flashlight is turned on in a dark room just what a difference that small amount of light makes? Did you notice how things you didn't think you would be able to see were visible even when the source of light was so weak?

It is amazing how the amount of light from one candle can dramatically transform a dark room.

Jesus said we are the light of the world. God has given each of us the Spirit of Light to impact the environment around us.

Sometime we take for granted the transformational power God has given to each of us. We fail to use it to its fullest. We rationalize that one human being cannot do much. So, why even try? We sometimes dwell on our own unworthiness that we feel useless as God's vessel for service to others. We fail to remember that we can have an incredible impact for change if we would just put it in proper perspective and act on it.

Just as one candle makes a difference in a dark room, we can make a difference in the world around us.

Now, imagine the change that occurs when more candles are lighted. The room becomes brighter as you can see.

At this point, light your candle and pass the light to others in the room so that all persons will soon be holding lighted candles.

Now, you can see greater detail in one another's faces, in the furniture, and in other objects in this room. This is like the Light of God present through the Body of Christ, the Church. As people of the Light gather, the Light shines brighter and God can be seen more clearly.

In the scripture in Matthew, the "you" can be interpreted either in the singular or the plural. Jesus commands us both as individuals and collectively as the Body of Christ to let the Light shine so God may be glorified.

This is the Church at its best: a community of faith sending forth the Light through good works to glorify our Creator. This is part of our mission as the Church... to allow the Light to work through us in making disciples for Jesus Christ. That is our ultimate mission and our reason for being the Church.

As we journey together through these sessions, may the Light guide us as we learn, grow and focus upon what it means to be in mission.

Let us pray: Source of Light, Source of Being, illuminate our hearts, minds and souls with your divine wisdom to know how to appropriately respond to the darkness around us in ways that truly glorify You, O Holy One, and reflect the grace and goodness of your enduring presence. Amen.



Blow out all candles except for the pillar candle, which may remain lit during this session.

Mission or Missions?

We are called to mission. Before beginning with opening discussion, clarify the difference between mission and missions. Often these terms are used interchangeably. However, there is a distinct difference between the two words.

Mission is the overarching task to which the Church is called. There is only one mission and it is God's mission. We are invited to participate in God's mission. It is broad in scope and should include all that we are and all that we do in order to make disciples for Jesus Christ. Missions are the tasks, projects, programs or means that we employ to fulfill the mission. This is the work of mission.

This distinction will help throughout all the discussions related to this study.

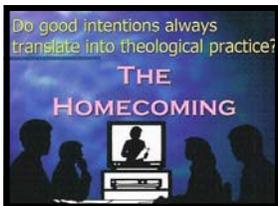


Opening Discussion

Begin by asking participants:

What are the reasons you are involved in mission?

Put the answers on a piece of newsprint that you can refer to later in the workshop.

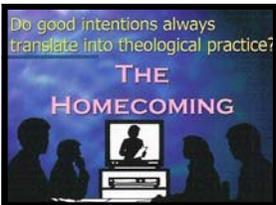


Do good intentions always translate into good theological sound practice?

Elaborate and share examples.

An Example

A wonderful example to begin discussion is a video clip from “The Homecoming,” a motion picture that inspired the Waltons television series. The video is available from _____. In order to use this video in a public setting such as your class, you must have a CCLV license. To obtain more information on securing this license, see _____.



If you choose not to show the video, you may like to share the story as presented below. Ask your group to look for ways the work of mission is carried out in both healthy and unhealthy ways.

An example of a humorous yet ineffective approach to outreach ministry is found in the video, “The Homecoming.” This movie served as the basis for “The Walton’s” television series that was popular in 1970s. The movie clip centers on a missionary that has come to Walton’s Mountain in the Blue Ridge of Virginia. Try to discern her motivations and their affect upon the children of Walton’s Mountain.

It is Christmastime on Walton’s Mountain. A neighbor boy, Claudie, comes to the Walton home inviting the children to join him at Ike Godsey’s General Store where a mission lady is giving out Christmas presents. At first, Mother Walton refuses to allow the children to accompany Claudie because she is adamant that Waltons do not accept charity. The children win her approval when they promise not to accept anything, but only observe and listen.

When they arrive at the store, the missionary begins her presentation by asking, “Who knows what a missionary is?”

One of the Walton children responds, “Somebody who spreads the Gospel to the infidels.”

The missionary says, “Exactly! And I am a missionary! I said to the ladies in our society, ‘why look to some far-away country for heathens when the Blue Ridge Mountains are filled with them. So, we didn’t send our gifts to some unappreciative savages, but to you, whose need is just as great. Now that is why I am here.”

The missionary proceeds to ask for a song from the children and offers to give a present to each child that recites a verse from the Bible. When the missionary spots little Elizabeth Walton,

she says she has a special present just for her. Elizabeth is torn because she would like the present but her mother told her not to accept anything. Her older brothers and sisters tell her to go ahead and accept the present and they would deal with their parents later.

Elizabeth wanted a doll for Christmas. When she receives the gift from the missionary, she guesses it might be a doll. When she opens it, she finds a doll with a broken face. She replied in horror, "It's dead. Somebody killed it!"

As tears stream down her face and she retreats into the arms of her older brother who assures her, "Maybe we can fix it."

But her older sister responds, "Never in a million years."



Group Discussion on the "Walton" Story

This Walton story provides an opportunity for group discussion on how not to do mission work. You may approach this by asking participants to think of ways mission was portrayed both in both healthy and unhealthy ways in the story of the missionary on Walton's Mountain. You may list these on newsprint

This clip is a marvelous example of how seemingly good intentions in mission are poorly implemented. The missionary has no understanding of who the people are. She has made assumptions. She has a disregard for the knowledge the children have of the Bible and Christianity. She comes across as patronizing and self-serving. The gift of the broken doll to Elizabeth sums up the attitude of the giver. The giver offers only cast-offs that are no longer needed. The receiver is treated as unworthy of a new doll. The broken doll communicates the wrong message lifted up in the example and life of Jesus Christ.

Other Stories

Invite participants to share other stories that illustrate actions that both reflect and do not reflect sound mission theology in practice.

What Does It Feel Like?

Imagine the feelings of recipients of mission action, including both positive and negative feelings. You may express your feelings for both contexts using various media such as paper, paint,

crayons, clay, etc. You may like to cut out pictures from magazines that express your feelings and reactions.

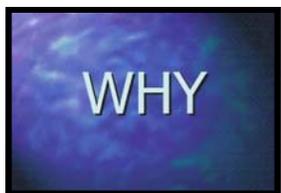
If time permits, allow persons to share their pieces of art and what they convey.

The Who, Why and How Concept

Introduce the Who, Why, How concept of understanding mission theology detailed in subsequent sessions. You will not need to go into detail since you will delve deeper into each one of these later in the workshop.



WHO – “Who” represents all participants in mission. Understanding this is vital to being faithful and successful. “Whom are we reaching out to?” “What are their needs and assets?” “What are the cultural implications?” “What should we know about them and ourselves before we respond?” These are serious questions to ask when learning about ourselves and the people to whom we reach out.



WHY – “Why” addresses the theological reasons and motivations for being involved in mission. “Why are we reaching out to these persons?” The answer to this question impacts the way we respond to mission and the end result.



HOW – Only by understanding the WHO and the WHY can we know ...



...HOW to respond in mission. Many times in mission planning, we go directly to the HOW without having an adequate understanding and appreciation for the WHO and the WHY. It is only by having a firm grasp on the WHO and the WHY that we can truly know HOW to respond appropriately and effectively.

These are the three key components that we will address in subsequent sessions.

Closing

If this is a single session, you may like to close with the following.
If not proceed to Session Two.

Leader (lifting the pillar candle): You are the light of the world.

*Participants: We carry the Light of Christ to all the world
glorifying God in all that we do.*

Leader: Go in peace.

ALL: Amen.

The leader may blow out the candle.

Session 2

EXPLORING WHO WE ARE

Session 2 explores who we are as human beings and our relationship to one another in the context of mission work.

Opening

If this is a separate session, the leader may begin by lighting the pillar candle saying: “You are the Light of the World.” The leader may continue with a prayer, scripture or short meditation.

Here is a prayer that is illuminated in this session that you may like to use:

New every day in your love, great God of light, and all day long you are working for good in the world. Stir up in us desire to serve you, to live peacefully with our neighbors, and to devote each day to your son, our Savior, Jesus Christ the Lord.

Amen. From The Worship Book - Services and Hymns, copyright MCMLXX, MCMLXXII, The Westminster Press

Biblical Background: Matthew 25:40

Ask the group:

To whom are we called to minister? We sometimes refer to these persons as “them” or “they.” Who are “they?”

To find the answers to the above, we can look to the scriptures.

Have someone read Matthew 25:40.

Begin discussion by asking:

Who are the ‘least of these’ in our world today?

Write the answers on newsprint.

As you collect a variety of answers, you may point out that many of us may have identified ourselves in one or more of the categories (i.e. lonely, abused, rejected). In a sense, we are all “one of the least

of these.” This may lead to a discussion about how we all are in need of God’s grace just as much as those we may stereotypically consider to be “the least of these.”

Who Are We as Human Beings?

Who are we? We are human beings. Who are we as human beings? Let’s look at the scripture for insight.

If time permits, you may pre-assign these scriptures and ask participants to read them at the appropriate time.

We are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27)

We are all in need of God’s grace (Romans 3:21-26)

We are all equal in the sight of God (Galatians 3:26-29)

God’s grace is available to all ()

We are beings with a capacity to love ()

Are there other scriptures that come to mind defining who we are as human beings?

List these on newsprint.

(ppt. slide)

The bottom line is that we all stand level at the foot of the cross.

We are all equally in need of God’s grace as human beings.

We all have something to offer. One is not better than another. One is not less than another. Just as we are loved by God equally, we should seek equality and balance in the way we love others.

Relationship Between Giver and Receiver

Does this understanding change how we relate to one another?

Let’s take a look at the stereotypical process that takes place in doing mission work. Each of us, consciously or unconsciously, develops our own perspective of mission. Typically, we begin with the model of a giver and receiver where a giver has something the receiver needs and gives it to him or her. Usually we think of in economic terms. The flow is from one to the other.

Ask the group:

What are the consequences of this type of understanding?

Does the giving action ever have any negative unintended consequences?

Here is an example is a story from the Red Bird Missionary Conference. You may wish to share this story.

Well-intended members from an out-of-state church decided that a wonderful Christmas project would be to collect items for a “poor” family in Kentucky. The whole congregation became involved in bringing items to the church. Two people were designated to make the several hundred-mile trip to deliver the gifts.

Upon their arrival, they told with great enthusiasm about their church’s project and here they were to personally deliver these gifts. The mission staff person tried to explain our policy was to work through less public displays of benevolence – the sensitive way would be to remain anonymous and allow people who had relationships with the family to make the delivery. The church people were adamant “We were sent to personally deliver these items to a poor family. People back home are expecting to see pictures and for us to tell about what happened when we get back.” Reluctantly, and against better judgment, the two persons were taken to a family’s home.

The children were ecstatic to receive toys, as any child would be. The mother was extremely grateful and expressed her thanks over and over. The father had removed himself from the room during all of “pomp and circumstance”. When the staff person noticed he was missing and turned his direction he was mouthing the words, “Go to hell!”

Lead a group discussion on how the father reacts and feels. We will focus on the motivations of the giver later.

Impact on Giver/Receiver

Mission involves and impacts both the giver and receiver.

How might mission affect the receiver? List your responses on newsprint

What might the receiver have to offer the giver?

Here is an example: Faith in Third World Communities.

A young adult was on her first mission trip to a country in Africa. She was concerned that she did not have the experience or knowledge to be an effective missionary. Her focus was on what she had to offer to the Africans. She went to Africa with an open mind and open heart.

When she arrived, she found that God's Spirit was strong among the people at the United Methodist mission station she visited. Their strong and abiding faith in the midst of their poverty and suffering was truly an inspiration to her, changing her life and worldview dramatically. She learned from the people in the mission station and village what it meant to trust God in the midst of adversity and deplorable living conditions. I

In this situation, the intended receivers (the African people) ended up being the givers and our young mission team member was the recipient of an invaluable gift of grace and love from God through the Africans. Her life was transformed

Paternalistic and Patronizing

Now let us consider our relationship with those that we may consider "the least of these."

It is easy to fall into the trap of being paternalistic or patronizing when relating to whom we reach out. We operate out of a sense they are in need and we have what is needed. There is a tendency to shift the balance of power and control toward the giver. The giver, consciously or subconsciously, may have a result in mind. When the result is not achieved as anticipated, the giver may feel the mission action is unsuccessful.

Focus upon paternalistic approaches to mission. Often volunteers go into the mission field, acting as a parent relating to the indigenous people as children. Sometimes poverty is equated with ignorance. You may share one or more of the following stories as examples to ignite discussion.

Examples for discussion starters:

MISSION SECRETARIES: Give us your stories for examples.

Possible questions to ask the group:

How would you define or describe this approach?

Do you have other examples of this to share?

How is this approach unhealthy?

Giving/Receiving from the Gospel Perspective

Let's look at a new model to define the relationship between the giver and receiver based upon the gospel perspective. In this perspective the relationship and action is cyclical and there is no differentiation between giver and receiver.

Rather than focus on a giver and a receiver, consider two persons created in God's image (imago dei) sharing with one another in a mutual supportive relationship. This is a more accurate description of who we are to be in such a relationship.

We find that giving and receiving is truly a cycle of love and relationship.

Relationships are key. It is important to build Christ-like relationships upon love and mutuality not based upon need. We are level at the foot of the cross. All are in need. Wholeness comes through God's grace and in our relationships with one another. Mission is relationship.

What would a partnership approach look like?

How would this approach differ from the paternalistic approach?

Relationships are built on love and mutuality. All parties have something to give and to receive. Relationship building is even more important than the actual task.

Share examples when the mission task takes priority over the building of relationships.

Examples:

MISSION SECRETARIES: Give us your stories for examples.

Share examples when relationships become more important than the task.

MISSION SECRETARIES: Give us your stories for examples.

Prevenient Mission

Often we are of the mind-set that we take Christ into the mission field. We forget God is already there and working among the people. As we prayed at the beginning of this session, God is at work for good in the world. We can call this prevenient mission.

Prevenient means “going before.” Prevenient mission refers to God’s work that is going on before we ever reach a mission situation. It is wise to remember that God can work beyond our own human efforts and prepares the way for us to minister.

Example:

Long ago, a missionary ventured into a tropical village where people had not heard of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He began to live among the people and tell the story of Jesus and of God’s love for humanity. One day, a village leader told the missionary, “We have always known of this man Jesus only we did not know his name or his story. Thank you for telling the story of that which we knew to be true deep in our souls.

MISSION SECRETARIES: Give us your stories for examples.

We need to recognize God’s “prevenient mission” wherever we are called to serve. God’s love and grace may not be understood in the same theological intellect that we understand, but God is at work in that situation. It is important to build the relationships and make the connections together with those to whom we minister so that we both can receive what God has for us.

Closing

If this is a single session, you may close with the following. If not proceed to Session Three.

Leader (lifting the pillar candle): You are the light of the world.

Participants: We carry the Light of Christ to all the world glorifying God in all that we do.

Leader: Go in peace.

ALL: Amen.

The leader may blow out the candle.

Session 3

EXPLORING WHY WE ARE INVOLVED IN MISSION

Session 3 explores motivations of persons involved in mission work and what they say theologically.

Opening

If this is a separate session, the leader may begin by lighting the pillar candle saying:

You are the Light of the World.

The leader may continue with a prayer, scripture or short meditation.

Refer to the list put on newsprint during session one for the question: Why are we involved in the work of mission? You can expand the list by asking...

What are some of the reasons we do mission work?

List on newsprint.

What are some of the motivations for mission involvement?

List on newsprint.

You may continue discussion with these questions:

Does involvement stem from a personal motivation or a divine call?

Can God use a personal motivation by turning it into a divine call?

Let's look at scripture for the biblical mandate. Our mandate stems from two key scriptures:

1. The Great Commission – Matthew 28:18-20

To go into all the world. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8)

You may facilitate discussion on how this scripture impacts our motivation for doing mission work.

2. The Greatest Commandments – Mark 12:28-34 – Love God first; neighbors next.

You may continue discussion by asking how this commandment of love affects our involvement in mission work.

Motivation for Mission

Let's look more closely at some of our motivations for mission involvement.

In the earlier story from the Red Bird Missionary Conference, we discussed the implications for those who are on the receiving side. Let's look at the motivation of the givers in this story. Why was it so important for them to hand-deliver the gifts?

(Ask for answers).

How did these motivations affect the father? What theological message did the father receive? How could this have been handled differently?

What we do reflects our theology.

What do the following motivations say theologically? Keep in mind that mission is about relationships. Each set describes two ends of a spectrum. Many of our motivations fall somewhere in between. Consider the biblical and theological understandings that can impact and shape future motivations.

(You may find stories to illustrate these points in the appendix.)

Self-Giving - Self-Gratification

Self-Giving – “I am involved in mission work and give freely because this is the example of Jesus.” Jesus set the example for giving as he lived his life as a servant expecting nothing in return. Ultimately, he gave his life freely for the benefit of humankind.

What does Jesus' example say about our motivation for giving?

OR

Self-Gratification - “I do mission work because I end up getting so

much more out of it than the people I serve. It makes me feel so good!”

How does it impact mission work? How does self-gratification fit into the biblical/theological perspective? How can we keep a healthy balance?

Encounter with God—Mission Vacation

Encounter with God – “I go on a mission trip because it is an opportunity to encounter God and be a disciple of Christ in a setting that is different from my home.”

You may like to refer to the concept of prevenient mission as mentioned in Session Two.

OR

Mission Vacation – “I like going a mission trip because it is a good alternative vacation for me.”

What are the theological connections?

Does viewing the mission trip as a vacation have an effect on the mission?

What are some of the effects?

Is there a redeeming value?

Example:

I remember the reason I went on my very first mission trip. It was an opportunity to have a vacation in another country without feeling guilty. I knew it would be an exciting way to see another part of the world. I

really wasn't interested in doing mission work, but just wanted to go along on the trip. My expectations were changed dramatically as I spent my first day in the primitive village far from what I felt was civilization.

I met God there in an unexpected way that changed my life. I discovered the value and the real reason for being involved in mission.

Even though my motivations were not the best for going on this mission trip, God had a way of helping me discover on this trip motivations that were much more Christ-like based upon love of God and others rather than myself.

Anonymous Giver - Santa Claus Syndrome

Anonymous Giver – We are but an instrument of God’s grace and goodness. We respond by giving not for our own recognition but for the glory of God. Jesus **addresses this in** . Giving anonymously shifts the focus from the human giver and allows for it to focus upon God, the Ultimate Giver.

OR

Santa Claus Syndrome – Sometimes giving is much like Santa Claus bringing presents creating a Christmas-like atmosphere.

What does this approach say about understanding the needs of the receiver, the appropriateness of the gift or the impact upon the surroundings?

Example:

A mission team was visiting a family in a mountain village of a third world country. The team members were so moved by the family’s plight that they wanted to go out and buy new clothing and shoes for each member of the family.

The team went to a nearby city and bought the items and took them back to the drab little dwelling where the family lived.

Two of the team members politely declined to be a part of this mission effort. When asked why, one of them responded, “I think the way we are doing this is inappropriate. It makes us look like Santa Claus barging into the house bearing gifts because we want to see the reactions and gain some sense of satisfaction. Besides, what are the rest of the people living around them going to think? Does our action say one family is more worthy than another? Will this family be the object of envy or jealousy from their neighbors?”

Instead, we should have made our gifts available anonymously through the relief center so nobody would be put in an awkward position.

When the others heard this reason for not participating, they began to talk about what their actions actually communicated to the family and people in their village and soon realized there were better ways to accomplish more.

Cultural Appreciation - Cultural Manipulation

Cultural Appreciation – Familiar ways of our culture should not be standards for us to follow. Are we open to see God

through the eyes of another culture? Going into a mission experience with openness to and a desire to learn from other cultures opens up the wideness of God throughout our relationships. God is present in other cultures in ways that are different from our own. Sometimes our cultural expression of faith is not appropriate in other cultures. It may feel uncomfortable or unnatural for us to explore our faith as witnessed in another culture.

Example:

I was traveling to various mission institutions in India and found that many of the Christians embraced the mystery of God through the disciplines of deep meditation and contemplation. They would spend long periods of time in silence appearing to accomplish nothing. I was very uncomfortable in this setting.

Then I asked my host the benefit of this practice, she began to open the door to a new dimension to my spirituality. Through careful instruction, I discovered how contemplation and meditation could help me connect with my own spirit in ways that brought me closer to the Almighty.

I will be forever indebted to the spiritual practices of a culture other than my own that took me on the next step of my journey.

You may ask participants to share when they experienced faith through another culture that added a new dimension to their understanding of God.

OR

Cultural Manipulation – Sometime cultural ideals rather than Christian values are given priority. Sometimes it is not until one interacts with another culture that one discovers our theology is shaped by our own culture. Is our way the best way? How do our actions impact the culture? Are the actions theologically appropriate?

Here is an example:

A Cambodia Country Director tells the story of designing new churches for the people of Cambodia. In a climate that is very hot, the American missionaries felt it was important to build churches with open sides that would allow the breeze to flow through the assembly area keeping the people as cool as possible. When the plan was presented to the Cambodians, it was resisted because in their culture, an important building

such as a church should have walls to indicate its significance and give it honor. The Cambodians would rather worship in discomfort than to worship in a space without walls that would appear to be less honorable to God.

Equality and Teachable Spirit - Patriarchal Approach

Equality and Teachable Spirit – Realizing we are equal in the eyes of God has a tremendous impact upon the way we approach mission work with others. By humbly approaching other cultures with an appreciation for what they have to offer our faith journey, we can learn much about God. It begins with listening. We must be willing to hear their story. A teachable spirit can expand the wideness of our understanding of God at work in the world.

Ask participants to share examples of how a teachable spirit benefits from interaction in another culture?

OR

Patriarchal Approach – We go in with the attitude that we are superior and are to guide them down the “right” path. (Missionary knows best!)

How does this motivation relate to what we have been learning about a theological understanding of relationships in mission?

Here is an example:

A building team went to Armenia to build a roof on a Christian Education Center. The American team tried as best they could to build the roof according to American standards hoping it would be a teaching example of the proper way to construct a roof.

At the completion, they asked a local man what he thought.

The man replied, “It is a poorly constructed roof.”

Taken aback, the building team leader asked the man why.

The local man responded, “You wasted too much wood in the construction of the roof. I could have built it with half as many rafters and saved a lot of wood.”

In assessing the situation, the team realized that wood was scarce in this area and the people used it sparingly. To build one roof with so much wood would deny a desperately needed roof on another building or home in the area.

Discernment and Flexibility – Control

Discernment and Flexibility – Allow God to be in control and guide the situation. Prayerful discernment together with those with whom you are in ministry can lead to a partnership that affirms the worth of all.

Example:

Some members of our church went to the home of an elderly gentleman referred to us by Social Services to rebuild his back porch that was badly in need of repair. The material list was ready. Experienced carpenters had signed on to do the job and a task list was prepared. We knew we would have to work steadily for two solid days in order to complete the job.

By the end of the first day, we were far off schedule because we felt the elderly gentleman was interfering with our work by constantly visiting with the workers telling them stories from his past. At the evening debriefing, much conversation centered around the frustration of not accomplishing our task. We wondered how we would ever finish the work on time.

One of the young men in our group said, “Maybe we are missing the real mission here. Maybe our mission is not the task of rebuilding the back porch but building a relationship with this wonderful man. I listened to him tell me about his life and faith. It was amazing. What an inspiration he’s been. Right now, he’s lonely and seems to have been forgotten by his family and community. I feel as if I didn’t want this job to end because I’ve found a new friend and mentor for my faith journey. This man has important things to share. Let’s not worry about finishing tomorrow. There is something far greater than just building a porch.”

It is easy for us in mission to want to fix things. Mission is not about fixing. It is really about experiencing the fullness of God and the fullness of what it means to be a human being in relation others. Our motivations can help or hinder our experience of God and one another. In order to embrace the fullness of God, our motivations need to focus upon building mutual relationships where all are empowered.

OR

Control – Tied closely with the patriarchal approach are control issues. We tend to desire control of situations. As North Americans

we are bound by our clocks and are very task-oriented. We tend to control the factors that enable efficiency in order to achieve the desired result.

List some examples of how our desire to control a situation has gotten in the way of mission. What does this say theologically?

Jesus Said...

This session began by focusing upon two important passages of scripture that help us understand why we are involved in mission. However, Jesus said many things about why we are in mission and illustrated numerous reasons through the parables he told.

Invite participants to divide into groups of two or three. Instruct them to use the Bible to find at least one other saying or event in which Jesus was involved that helps us to understand why we should follow him in mission.

After a time of searching, invite a spokesperson from each group to share.

Closing

If this is a single session, you may close with the following. If not proceed to Session Four.

Leader (lifting the pillar candle): You are the light of the world.

***Participants: We carry the Light of Christ to all the world
glorifying God in all that we do.***

Leader: Go in peace.

ALL: Amen.

The Leader may blow out the candle.

Session 4

EXPLORING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR MISSION

Session 4 explores the theological foundations for carrying out the mission of the church.

Opening

If this is a separate session, the leader may begin by lighting the pillar candle saying:

You are the Light of the World.

The leader may continue with a prayer, scripture or short meditation.

Mission Is Central

Mission is more than a committee, program or the work of a group of interested people. Mission is not a project of the church. It is the purpose of the church.

Making mission merely a component of ministry tends to distort its true role. The mission of the church is to make disciples. Mission is interwoven into all aspects of Christian discipleship. It cannot be separated into a discipline all its own. Mission is central to our living out of the Christian faith.

So, when mission is understood in its fullness, the church thrives.

For group discussion:

What is your experience of mission in your local church?

Is it compartmentalized? Delegated to a committee?

Or

Is it an integral part of the life of the entire congregation?

Explain.

How can mission be made to be a part of all of the life of the church?

Spun Out in Mission

The focus of the church is to move beyond the walls of the sanctuary and into the world.

The church is made up of individuals blessed with the Good News to share.

Individuals form community, koinia, the Body of Christ, the church.

Once we are grounded in Christ, our task is to share the Good News forth from the Community of Faith and into the world to transform the lives of others. It can be illustrated by energy proceeding from the eye of a hurricane. As the eye spins, energy is thrown outward spreading over an area that grows wider as the storm builds. Fueled by warm waters it can become quite powerful for those on the inside as well as the outside.

When a church goes forth in mission, its impact moves beyond a local congregation to affect a wider community. Christian nurture in a local setting fuels the force of God's love and grace that spreads beyond the walls of a church building.

When energy and concern is inwardly focused, the church is not fulfilling the Gospel mandate and starts to lose its vitality. This can be illustrated by the spiral that develops when emptying a bathtub. As the water goes down the drain and the level in the bathtub drops, a spiral (somewhat like a tornado) develops. It rotates inward. As it spins faster it becomes smaller and finally disappears down the drain when the water is gone. This is illustrative of a dying church. The energy is focused inward. The life of the congregation finally collapses and the church is gone.

For group discussion:

What kind of church described above do you belong to? Explain.

Are there ways that you can shift the focus of your congregation outward even more?

Mission and Stewardship

Another building block is stewardship. When you hear this word, what do you think of?

(Put on newsprint)

Often when we speak of stewardship, we think of many, giving it away, making a sacrifice, doing with less and many other things that tend to make us feel like we are losing something. The reality is when we faithfully participate in stewardship, we lose nothing, but actually gain something. Scripture calls us to operate out of a theology of abundance not scarcity. Mission is good stewardship.

To illustrate this, invite two persons from your group to stand beside you, each one holding an unlit candle. Light your candle from the Christ candle and say:

We receive our light from Christ, an abundance of blessings to meet our every need.

Invite participants to watch what happens when it is shared with another. (Light candle of first person) Point out to the group that even though for a brief moment, it appears we have lost some of our light. But it quickly returns where it was. Light is not diminished but multiplied in the light that now rises from another.

Watch again as the light is shared with still another candle. And just as experienced in opening worship, the light continues to grow for the benefit of all. This is the result of good stewardship.

The same is true for the local church. If mission giving is put first and we give out of our abundance rather than scarcity, the needs for our church will also be met.

An example:

A new urban congregation is meeting in a school auditorium growing by leaps and bounds. Despite the fact they have not acquired a permanent facility for themselves, they have built three church buildings for congregations in other parts of the world as a part of their mission. This is an indicator of their commitment to the mission of the church by giving their first-fruits as an offering to God.

Mission is good stewardship. God has blessed the world with all that is needed for life. As stewards of God's creation, we are called to use the earth's resources for the common good of all

people. We are called to operate out of a theology of abundance not scarcity. Can you think of any stories in the Bible that illustrate this truth? Do you remember the story of the Widow's Mite?

Here is a modern example:

Myrtle lived her entire life in unpretentious surroundings. She struggled financially and was blind from childhood. By all standards, she qualified as a mission recipient.

Though she did not have the opportunity for formal education, her keen mind, love of people, sense of humor, and simple but strong faith in God made her one of God's extraordinary people.

Her husband died of a gunshot wound inflicted by an intruder who knew their meager funds were kept in their house. Out of her limited resources, she was making payments on her husband's funeral expenses. Yet, when the local mission school burned Myrtle wanted to contribute to its rebuilding, because she had five nieces and nephews "who needed that school".

She asked me to bring her purse and take some money for the school fund. There was \$111.00 in some bills and coins – all that she possessed. Knowing this woman, I chose a \$10.00 bill knowing I could not take the \$1.00 only. She checked her money, which was earmarked for identification; removed the \$100.00 bill from her purse and said, "This is what I want you to take". No greater donation was given to rebuild our school than this widow's mite.

Stewardship is more than money. It also is time, talent, care for the earth, prayer... Here is an example of offering the gifts of time and prayer.

Example:

One day a pastor visited a young quadrapalegic woman. When he asked her how she was doing, she replied, "I am having a wonderful day. I spent the morning in the Philippines and it was just great!"

The pastor was puzzled and said, "Oh, you've been watching the Travel Channel on TV."

The woman replied, “No, this morning I started thinking about our missionary in the Philippines and decided to spend some time in prayer for her and her ministry. It then made me think about the mission project our church supports there. I began to imagine what it must be like to work there and I spent a long time praying for all the lives that are touched by that ministry. It was an incredible morning of being with the people in the Philippines. What blessing it was for me.”

Stewardship is wise use of resources we have. We have committed our prayers, presence, gifts and service to the church. The church exists to be in mission.

Can you think of other examples of good stewardship in mission?

Share.

For the sake of the world, we cannot afford not to be in mission.

Mission in the Wesleyan Tradition

Christianity’s transforming impact upon society has always been a primary focus of the Methodist movement tracing its beginnings to John Wesley. He established a tradition of mission involvement through social action. This was a defining characteristic of Methodism.

View the Wesley and Social Concerns Video Clip – Segment 5, John Wesley’s 300th Birthday.

Discussion may follow.

Wesley said...

Divide into small groups of 3-5 persons. Give each group one of the following quotes by or about John Wesley. Ask members of the group to discuss how the quote is reflected in the mission of the church today. Invite a spokesperson from each group to briefly share their quotation and insights with the total group.

“Do no harm.” - John Wesley

“Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever as you can.” - John Wesley

“I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow-creature, let me do it now; let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.” - John Wesley

“Earn all you can, save all you can, give away all you can.” - John Wesley

“When I have money, I get rid of it quickly, lest it find a way into my heart.” - John Wesley

“Wesley’s ministry with the poor, was intensely practical. It included, ‘feeding, clothing, housing the poor, preparing the unemployed for work and finding them employment, visiting the poor sick and prisoners; devising new forms of health care education and delivery for the indigent; distributing books to the needy; and raising structural questions about an economy that produced poverty. Wesley’s turn to the poor; however, was not simply service of the poor, but more importantly life with the poor. He actually shared the life of the poor in significant ways, even to the point of contracting diseases from their beds. To be in Christ meant to take the form of Christ own life for and with the poor. To be a disciple of Christ meant to be obedient to Christ’s command to feel his sheep and to serve the least of his sister and brothers.” - M. Douglas Meeks

“It is certain so long as we know in part, that all will not see all things alike. It is an unavoidable consequence of the present weakness and shortness of human understanding, that several will be of several minds in religion as well as in common life. So it has been from the beginning of the world, and so it will be until the restitution of all things. Every wise one, therefore will allow the same liberty of thinking which s/he desires they should allow her/himself; and she will no more insist on their embracing his/her options. That person bears with those who differ from themselves, and only asks with whom they desires to until in love that single question: Is their heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?” - John Wesley

“I look upon all the world as my parish.” - John Wesley

“Though I am always in a haste, I am never in a hurry, because I never undertake more work than I can go through with perfect calmness of spirit.” - John Wesley

“We are always open to instruction, willing to be wiser everyday than we were before, and to change whatever we can change for the better.” - John Wesley

“ Catch on fire with enthusiasm and people will come for miles to watch you burn.” - John Wesley

“As long as you feel your own weakness and helplessness, you will find help from above.” - John Wesley

“When I was young I was sure of everything; in a few years, having been mistaken a thousand times I was not half so sure of most things as I was before; at present, I am hardly sure of anything but what God has revealed to me.” - John Wesley

*“Wesley did not wait for the government to act. Ministering to the poor and their needs was part of the job description of every Methodist. They were not simply to wait until the poor came to them, but were to seek them out. Wesley was convinced that there is no substitute for personal contact with the poor.” - Theodor Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley’s Theology Today**

Wrap Up

Looking at the building blocks presented in this session. Which ones brought new understanding to your concept of mission?

Elaborate.

You may invite participants to share with a neighbor or in small groups.

Closing

If this is a single session, you may close with the following. If not proceed to Session Five.

Leader (lifting the pillar candle): You are the light of the world.

Participants: We carry the Light of Christ to all the world glorifying God in all that we do.

Leader: Go in peace.

ALL: Amen.

Session 5

MOVING FROM WHY TO HOW

Session 5 explores how sound mission theology can impact the way Christians do mission work.

Opening

If this is a separate session, the leader may begin by lighting the pillar candle saying:

You are the Light of the World.

The leader may continue with a prayer, scripture or short meditation.

Transition to Being and Doing

In this session, we will begin to apply the theology of mission to how we do the work of mission. We move from an understanding of who we are called to be to what we are called to do.

In our spiritual journey, there is both an inward and outward dimension. Often in mission, we begin with the outward dimension as experienced through service.

However, we need to begin with the inward journey, being grounded in Christ. Then we are empowered to go out into the world.

What we are called to be determines what we are to do.

In the following discussion of being and doing, if time permits, you may ask participants to read the scriptures noted. You may also provide time for them to search for other passages that may relate to the points made.

Being

We are called to be...

Redeemed and Restored People of God

Romans 5:1-6 – We are justified by faith; Christ died for us.

1 Peter 2:9 – You are a chosen people

Hebrews 8 – The New Covenant

Galatians 2:20 – Jesus loved and gave his life for us.

Are there others?

For a more in-depth study, ask participants to use concordances, topical Bibles, etc. to find other scriptures which support this truth.

The Body of Christ

1 Corinthians 12:4-27 – One Body with Many Members with Various Gifts

1 Corinthians 10:16-17 – One Body in Christ (Eucharist)

Romans 12:4-8 – One Body with Many Gifts

Galatians 3:26-29 – No longer Jew or Greek... all belong to Christ

Are there others?

For a more in-depth study, ask participants to use concordances, topical Bibles, etc. to find other scriptures which support this truth.

At this point, speak about the importance of relationships in the process of doing missions.

Relationships with team members

Relationships with indigenous church members

Partnership (Good Samaritan/Innkeeper)

Obedient Servants

Matthew 25:14-30 – Talents

Luke 17: 7-10 – Duties of Faithful Servant

Mark 12: 41-44 – Widow's Mite

1 Peter 1:13-16 – Call to Obedient Living

Are there others?

For a more in-depth study, ask participants to use concordances, topical Bibles, etc. to find other scriptures which support this truth.

Humble Servants

Micah 6:8 – Walk Humbly

Phil. 2:3-8 – Attitude of Humility

James 4:6-10 – God Exalts the Humble

Barnabas

Are there others?

For a more in-depth study, ask participants to use concordances, topical Bibles, etc. to find other scriptures which support this truth.

Agents of Transformation

The Story of Jonah

Acts 3:1-10 – Peter, an instrument for healing a beggar

Paul

Are there other characteristics of what we are to be as followers of Jesus Christ?

You may list on newsprint.

Doing

We are called to do...

Preach, Teach, Witness

Matt. 28:16-20 - Great Commission

Colossians 3:16-17 - Teach with Wisdom

II Timothy 4:1-5 - Persistence in Proclamation

Acts 1:8 - You Are Witnesses

Are there others?

For a more in-depth study, ask participants to use concordances, topical Bibles, etc. to find other scriptures which support this truth.

Glorify God

Luke 4:8 - Worship Only the Lord Your God

Hebrews 12:28-29 - Give Thanks... Give God Acceptable Worship

Psalm 100 - Worship the Lord with Gladness

Are there others?

For a more in-depth study, ask participants to use concordances, topical Bibles, etc. to find other scriptures which support this truth.

Feed and Care For Others; Serve

John 21:15-19 -Peter and Jesus – feed my sheep

Luke 10:30-37 -Good Samaritan

Luke 14:12-14 -Invite the least

Acts 6:1-3 - Appointed to serve

Matthew 25:31-46 - Feed, clothe...

Deuteronomy 24:19+ -Sharing with gleaners

Are there others?

For a more in-depth study, ask participants to use concordances, topical Bibles, etc. to find other scriptures which support this truth.

Love

I John 4:7-21 -Love one another

Mark 12:31 -Love your neighbor as yourself

I Corinthians 13 -Love Is...

Luke 6:27-36 -Love for Enemies

I John 3:16 -Lay down our lives out of love

Are there others?

For a more in-depth study, ask participants to use concordances, topical Bibles, etc. to find other scriptures which support this truth.

Reconcile; Forgive

Matt. 5:23-24 -Reconcile with Brother/Sister

Matt. 18:21-22 -Unlimited Forgiveness

II Cor. 5:15-21 -Ministry of Reconciliation

Are there others?

For a more in-depth study, ask participants to use concordances, topical Bibles, etc. to find other scriptures which support this truth.

Do justice

Luke 4:18-21 (Proclaim release to the captives...)

Micah 6:6-8 (What does the Lord require?)

James 1:27

J = Do as Jesus did.

U = Keep ourselves unspotted.

S = Visit the sick.

T = Take care of the widows.

I = Include others before self.

C = Care for the orphans.

E = This is true Eternal religious worship that is pure unto God.

Are there other characteristics of what we are to do as followers of Jesus Christ?

You may list on newsprint.

Now we have looked at the scriptural foundations for what we are to be and do. Now let's look at the theological implications and how they lead us to how we do mission. The Global Mission Wheel is a tool that helps us make this connection.

The Mission Wheel

A visual way of describing being and doing is through the Mission Wheel.

The starting point for mission is God. In the beginning, God has been a missionary God. How have you seen God at work as a missionary God?

God's greatest mission is through the gift of Jesus Christ. Central in this diagram is "Christ Over All." The arrows illustrate mission is the movement of God's love among people and to all of creation.

Let's divide the wheel into four sections with the top two sections signifying "Being" and the bottom two signifying "Doing."

United Methodists have used the phrase, "Open hearts. Open minds and Open doors" to describe who we are and what we do. "Open Hearts" and "Open Minds" are related to our "being." "Open Doors" and a fourth component that we have added, "Open Hands," relate to our doing.

In each of these quadrants, we find a key component for mission and a way to develop it.

In the Open Hearts section, the key component is spiritual formation. This is developed through spiritual disciplines. As a group, What are some of the spiritual disciplines? (ie. Prayer, fasting, meditation, conferencing, sacraments, koinia, contemplation, scripture reading)

In the "Open Minds" section, the key component is Biblical / Theological Foundation. This is developed through Mission Education, which is what you are doing through this workshop. We need to know scripture and how to apply scriptures that have power and how that power can be unleashed through mission. Some of the ways to do this are through Disciple Bible Study, Upper Room Resources, Schools of Christian Mission, etc. Mission seeks God's will through the study and application of Scripture in our lives.

These two sections help us to understand who we are called to be. Unless we know who we are called to be we cannot know what we are called to do.

The bottom two sections of "Open Doors" and "Open Hands" are connected by the word "Doing." We experience "Christ Over All" through Open Doors.

In the "Open Doors" section, the key component is Partnerships. This is developed through hospitality made visible through relationships. In hospitality, the action between the guest and host often flows back and forth. Offering hospitality to those who are "strangers" in our own family, community, church and the world does not always feel comfortable.

In the "Open Hands" section, the key component is Action. This is developed through Creative Energy which compasses a practical application of activities that may incorporate hard

work, commitment, time, energy and an attitude of understanding.

The lines that divide the sections are not solid. Open Minds, Open Hearts, Open Doors, and Open Hands have the ability to transcend and move beyond limits or obstructions within their individual sections. Also, one may enter into the dynamics of mission at any section around the wheel. You can enter at any point but it is vital that all four sections are incorporated into our missional journey.

The four sections are encircled with the words “Justice,” “Mercy,” “Love,” “Grace,” “Peace,” “Compassion,” “Forgiveness,” and “Empowerment.” These words remind us that mission is the movement of God’s love toward people. They are characteristics that result when mission functions at its best.

“Worship” embraces the whole “Global Mission Wheel.” God intends that the church be a worshipping and witnessing community. Worship is our opportunity to come together as a faith community and celebrate the redemptive, transforming power of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

But worship does not end within the walls of the sanctuary. This is symbolized when an acolyte carries a lighted candle lighter out of the sanctuary at the end of a worship service. As Christian disciples, we carry the Light of Christ into the world. In doing so, worship and glorification of God continues through who we are and what we do in our daily living wherever that may be.

Closing

If this is a single session, you may like to close with the following. If not proceed to Session Six.

Leader (lifting the pillar candle): You are the light of the world.

Participants: We carry the Light of Christ to all the world glorifying God in all that we do.

Leader: Go in peace.

ALL: Amen.

The leader may blow out the candle.

Session 6

OUR RESPONSE

Session 6 explores how participants can respond in mission to God's call based upon sound theology with practical applications.

Opening

If this is a separate session, the leader may begin by lighting the pillar candle saying:

You are the Light of the World.

The leader may continue with a prayer, scripture or short meditation.

In this section, we will use the material that we discussed on WHO and WHY to influence HOW we do mission.

Basic Principles

Let's begin with some basic principles. Of course, this is not an exhaustive list and you may feel free to add others.

First, we must commit to mission education and understanding mission theology, especially the importance of focusing on the building of relationships rather than completing a task. Mission is about people and their relationships, not projects. It begins with our being grounded in Christ.

Second, we need to keep the concept of Prevenient Mission before us at all times. God is already present in the mission situation and at work among the people .

Third, be open to the Holy Spirit. It is about God's will not our will. It's God's mission to begin with. In order to discern God's will, we must be open to the Spirit through prayer and

spiritual discernment. Spiritual discernment comes about by listening to God and others. Mission plans that are formulated through spiritual discernment will reflect sound biblical and theological concepts. This process demands openness, flexibility and a willingness to commit to a process that may require more time and energy than in typical decision-making. You may even find God leads you to a conclusion that is quite different from your original notion.

Fourth, focus upon putting love into action. Make sure that all action is rooted in love.

Reflect upon I Corinthians 13. Paraphrase. Discuss participants' understanding of action rooted in love.

Fifth, develop an understanding and appreciation for the people with whom you are working. Acknowledge differences that exist. Don't try to homogenize. Listen to the people; learn from them. Strive to abandon any preconceived notions. Be open to the realities and differences in various cultures. Be aware of how culturally-tainted our practice of Christianity is and do not force our expression on another culture. Rather, let Christianity flourish in the culture where it exists.

The statement above has the potential to spark much lively discussion. Be prepared to flesh out this idea. Culture impacts the expression of Christianity. It is important to remember that no one culture offers the perfect interpretation of the Gospel.

Example:

A new missionary was advised by a local leader when she arrived in her new assignment, "I hope you are not here to try to change our culture and I hope you are not going to pretend to be one of us. If you are real, and allow me to be real, we can develop a relationship and learn from one another."

Sixth, remember to be humble. Humility can go a long way in opening doors of opportunity. It also helps one reflect the true nature of Jesus Christ.

At this time allow the group, to offer other ideas for guiding principles and list them on newsprint.

Planning – A Crucial Step

In order to complete a successful mission project, careful planning is essential. As you go through the planning process, it is important to ask at each step, “What are the biblical/theological concepts implied in our decisions?”

Here are some steps to follow in planning:

Ascertain Gifts - First, ascertain the strengths and the gifts your congregation or group has to offer. List them. Which ones are prominent? Just as important, strive to learn as much as you can about the strengths and gifts of those with whom you will be in partnership.

Need Assessment - Second, what is the need or what are the needs that God is calling us to meet (both ours and theirs)?

Match Gifts and Needs - Third, look at strengths and gifts. Determine if and how they apply to meeting the defined need(s).

Prioritize - Fourth; prioritize the needs and your responses.

Action Plan - Fifth, develop an action plan for response. Borrowing a tip from the journalism profession, be sure to cover all the bases involving the 5 Ws and 1 H: Who, What, When, Where, Why and How.

Implementation - Sixth, implement the action plan.

Evaluation - Seventh, encourage feedback and evaluate. Often this important step is omitted or overlooked. However, it can be the most important step. Here it is more important than ever to reflect on how the biblical/theological concepts were carried out.

Good questions to ask are:

What works?

What doesn't work?

What can be improved upon?

What is the next step?

What did we learn?

Were relationships formed and strengthened?

Using the Connection

The United Methodist Church is people, not a structure of committees and task groups. The connection through people is beneficial to planning and implementing mission. Whatever gifts your congregation possesses, the United Methodist Church has a way for you to offer them in mission. Here are the people who can resource you.

District Mission Secretaries – Each district should have a district mission secretary or the equivalent. If this person does not have what you need, he/she will be able to direct you to the proper source.

Conference Mission Secretaries – Each conference has a Conference Secretary for Global Ministries. This person is responsible for training District Mission Secretaries and being a resource for the entire annual conference. Don't be afraid to call upon them. They are always willing to enable mission through the local church.

Volunteer in Mission Coordinator – Each conference should have a person who is responsible for Volunteer in Mission teams. They have experience and knowledge that can facilitate a successful mission opportunity.

Jurisdictional Resource Persons – The Advance Office of the General Board of Global Ministries has an Advance representative in every jurisdiction. Additionally, some jurisdictions may have resource persons who can help in the area of mission.

General Board of Global Ministries – Persons in UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief), the Women's Division, Mission Personnel, Mission Context and Relationships, and Evangelism and Church Growth can address specific concerns in their areas of expertise. These persons are important in connection with mission throughout the world. Through GBGM, the United Methodist Church is in partnership with other organizations such as Church World Service, Heifer Project, etc.

The Advance

For nearly 60 years, the Advance for Christ and His Church has provided a way for persons or groups to designate gifts to specific projects. One of the most distinctive features of the Advance is that 100% of every dollar given goes directly to the project for which it is designated.

Obtain the latest Advance Toolbox. It includes a DVD, Partnership in Mission catalog and other useful resources. The toolbox is sent to pastors each fall to help interpret the Advance to local congregations.

Covenant Relationships With GBGM Missionaries

A very important opportunity to partner in God's mission is by supporting a General Board of Global Ministries missionary. Ask the group, if their church is in a covenant relationship with a GBGM missionary. You may like to ask for their missionary's name, where they serve and for any additional information.

PUT IN PARTICULARS

Resources and Training

This section offers some basic tools to use in resourcing and training mission committees in the local church.

Getting Started

Here are two primary resources to help leaders in local churches develop a mission program.

Steps for Persons Leading Missions in the Local Church - These guidelines for local church mission leaders contain program ideas, resources and activities. It is available free from the Service Center

Guidelines for Mission: Reaching the World - This booklet is part of the ***Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation*** series and is revised each quadrenium to reflect changes made by General Conference. It has much helpful information for local mission leaders offering planning and program ideas, resources and activities. It is available from Cokesbury.

GBGM Website

Mission leaders should become familiar with the General Board of Global Ministries website: <http://gbgm-umc.org/>. It is the gateway to a wealth of information and resources. Some of the areas that may be most helpful to local church mission leaders are:

Missionary Covenant Relationships - http://gbgm-umc.org/who_we_are/mp/covenant.cfm

Missionary Biographies - http://gbgm-umc.org/who_we_are/mp/bios.cfm

The Advance - <http://gbgm-umc.org/advance/>

UMCOR - <http://gbgm-umc.org/umcor/>

UMCOR Hotline - <http://gbgm-umc.org/umcor-hotline>

UMW – Women’s Division - <http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/>

My GBGM – This feature found on the GBGM homepage allows persons to personalize use of the GBGM website and provides access to special features.

Service Center

The Service Center is your primary source for mission materials that are both free and for purchase. It distributes resources intended for use with GBGM’s programs and services, especially for local church leaders in Mission, Nurture or Outreach, organizations of United Methodist Women, and Health and Relief.

The Service Center also distributes resources for the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns.

You may now order online at www.scoders.org or <http://gbgm-umc.org/e-store/>

Periodicals

New World Outlook - *New World Outlook* connects local congregations to the mission work of the General Board of Global Ministries. The magazine suggests ways for becoming involved in outreach, support, and even hands-on help.

Response - *Response’s* dynamic articles and photographs tell the mission story of United Methodist Women and stir readers to

solidarity and action with women, youth and children of the world. The magazine carries a message of faith and hope, and a call for response to the reign of God.

Interpreter - *Interpreter* is the official magazine for United Methodist laity and clergy. For 44 years, *Interpreter* has been the vehicle through which local churches share ideas and learn about the church's national and international programs and ministries.

Southeastern Jurisdiction Volunteers in Mission

United Methodist Volunteers In Mission (UMVIM), Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ) exists to promote, encourage and enable Christians to exemplify “Christian Love In Action”. Its aim is to accomplish the Great Commission by providing short-term mission opportunities for everyday Christians to reach a new generation with God's love.

UMVIM provides opportunities for service by developing and nurturing relationships with domestic and international leaders. It continually evaluates contacts with these leaders to provide comprehensive project information. The SEJ office strives to connect volunteers' talents to suitable projects for effective service.

The web address is www.umvim.org.

Closing

Appendix B

Mission Stories

Only at Home

A parishoner called the conference mission office excited because her church decided to collect baby blankets for mission.

She said many people in their church got involved and had a wonderful time collecting and displaying the blankets during Sunday worship. The only problem was she didn't know where to send them. She had never seen a project asking for blankets, but just thought it would be a good idea to collect them.

After some time the conference staff person suggested that there may be some places where UMCOR could use the blankets.

But the woman said "Oh no! We want them to go to someone in our community. We don't know who needs them but we thought surely somebody must need them!"

Personal Agenda

During Hurricane Isabel, churches across the conference were encouraged to collect health kits and flood buckets to send to Sager Brown replenishing supplies which had already been sent out. Two weeks later, a parishoner called the conference mission office very happy to report their congregation collected 25 health kits they wanted to send to a particular church which had been hit hard by the storm.

However, nobody at the church returned her calls. The conference staff person explained that the pastor and church were still very much in the throws of the disaster and it was very likely that the phone may be out of order. The staff person suggested she send the kits to UMCOR, especially since this particular church along with others had already received hundreds of kits immediately after the storm. But she insisted that the kits were collected for this specific church and this church only.

So after several calls, the staff person contacted the pastor of the church explaining the situation. The pastor very kindly said, "Well, we already have all we need, but we will be happy to help her out. Tell her she can go ahead and send the kits and we will find some use for them."

Benevolence Without Need Assessment

A UMVIM team went down to Mexico on a mission trip. When they returned home

with the pictures and stories, a rather wealthy man in the congregation was moved and gave a large sum of money. He had been a school teacher all his life and wanted the money to be used toward education.

The pastor decided that he would go down Mexico and locate a piece of land that this church could buy on which to build a school. He never thought to consult with the Methodists of that area, the missionary or the local community leaders to see how they thought the money could be used best.

Is It Appropriate?

A new missionary couple serving in Africa wanted to do something special for their neighbor's children for Christmas. They asked the father and mother if it would be OK to buy their children a pair of shoes. The parents graciously agreed. The missionaries went to the city bought the shoes. The children were happy with their new gift.

Months later the missionaries learned that the extended family of their neighbors, seeing the children with new shoes, decided the family had become more wealthy than the rest of them. So they took the family's winter food supply from their barns.

The neighbors now had to come and borrow food from the missionary to feed the family for the winter.

The missionaries learned that in that culture if someone offers to give you a gift you never refuse the gift. It would be rude and insulting. Even if the gift is not needed or turns out to be more harmful, you always graciously accept the gift.

The missionaries also learned that it takes more than a few weeks or even a few months to understand the cultural ramifications of many well meaning actions.

The best gift we can give is the gift of a relationship where we really get to know one another and learn from each other as we are transformed in Christ.

Investigation Needed

A local congregation became very excited about helping somebody for Thanksgiving. They decided to reach out to their Hispanic newcomers in their community. So they raised money and bought very large turkeys and all the fix-ins and proudly went to make their first visit and delivery. Joyfully, they reported back to the entire congregation the next Sunday the successes of their great mission project.

Several months later, they discovered the Hispanics had no ovens.

Consider the Consequences

A UVMIM team visited for a few days in a remote village in Nigeria. They were very

concerned about the low birth weight of the babies they saw there.

When they returned home, they decided the village needed better pre-natal care and vitamins for the mothers. So they put together a program, including very graphic pictures of the small babies. They raise much money and started sending vitamins. They were very proud to be a part of what they felt was a successful mission.

Over time the birth rate of the babies of that village increased. The only problem was so did the rate of mothers dying while delivering the now larger babies.

Reasonable, But Appropriate?

An UMVIM team from the USA traveled to a small village in Mozambique where they visited for a few hours. One of the team members, a district superintendent, was approached by a local Mozambique pastor asking if it would be possible for his district to raise funds for a motor bike for him. Like most Mozambiquians, he received a very low salary and did not own a vehicle meaning he must travel by public transportation. Often it meant riding in the back of a pick-up truck 45 minutes each way to visit his congregation.

The district superintendent was very touched and began thinking about ways he would get his district involved. The only problem was how could he know if this was the place of greatest need where a motorbike could be used. So, he decided to talk with the bishop of that country to ask him advise. He was very glad that he did because he discovered in the northern part of the country there were two pastors who traveled more than 300 miles on a bicycle to visit their churches because there was no public transportation at all in their area.

True Tale of Partnership

A church team visited Chile where they provided the funds and labor for a new church building. They felt very good about their partnership. They decided that they would send several thousand dollars additionally to build the pastor's home.

They were surprised when they received word from the area's GBGM missionary that they should not send the money because the missionary wanted this to be a true partnership and not one that fostered dependency. The people of that village needed to have some investment in their church. They had the resources and could build the pastor's house themselves.

Instead of waiting for the people from the USA to do the project for them, they used their own resources. Together with the church in the USA they entered a true partnership for the village.

Cultural Considerations

A UMVIM team visiting Kenya was distraught to see the women of the village having to

walk several miles each day to get water from the river. So when they returned home they decided the people needed a well in middle of the village. So they started a great campaign to raise money for the well. The well was dug right in the middle of the village as planned.

Several years later they visited this village again and were surprised to see that they women were once again walking several miles to the river to get water. They asked if the well was broken, but discovered that it was working just fine. However, there were several problems with the well. Water would puddle up and mosquitoes would breed resulting in a larger out break of malaria claiming many lives especially among the young children.

Also in this village, women lived oppressed lives often at the hands of their husbands. So the walk each day to the river was the one chance each day the women had to be together without the threat of being mistreated by the men.

Appropriate Relationships

Sarah Jane, 16, was rather plain and built more like G.I. Joe than Barbie. She was shy, withdrawn and self-conscious. Her parents asked if she could join the VIM team going to Honduras to improve her Spanish, broaden her perspective and serve God – in that order. There were no other teens on the team, but the group welcomed her. Her roommate was a woman in her fifties who had raised several girls and found herself frequently parenting Sarah Jane.

A group of local teenage boys hung around the work site each day chatting with the Americans and helping the work team. Several of them began to pay attention to Sarah Jane flirting with her and teasing her. This was something she had never experienced; she was enthralled.

Her participation in team activities all but ceased. At the end of the day, instead meeting with the team for discussion and devotions, Sarah Jane would wander off by herself to spend time with the boys of the village. The team leader told her that her behavior was inappropriate. In this culture nice young women don't spend time with young men without a chaperone. Her behavior was sending a very negative message to the community and furthermore, it was dangerous.

Sarah Jane cried, pouted and dragged around the work site unless the local boys were present. The team was sympathetic but critical and uncomfortable about her. The work team returned to the United States without any unfortunate incidents. Now Sarah Jane is eager to go back to Honduras.

Broken Promises

Gene, a 42-year married man with no children, joined a VIM team going to the Dominican Republic to build a church in a small mountainside village. Gene was an excellent telemarketer but his relationships with team members were awkward and strange. He was a loner and his lack of building skills isolated him. Gene was proud that he spoke Spanish

moderately well.

At the work site he was drawn to the local teenage boys who came to watch and help the team as they worked. Gene engaged them in conversation asking questions and telling jokes. He developed a close friendship with Miguel, 15, who wanted to learn English. The two would wander away from the group and spend hours naming things in English and Spanish. They were together constantly. Miguel was there asking for Gene first thing in the morning and stayed until way passed bedtime.

The local pastor spoke to the team leader saying people were talking about this intensifying relationship. Although Miguel had loving parents and brothers and sisters, Gene suggested that he was willing to adopt Miguel and take him back to live in America. Miguel took Gene to meet his parents. At first they were shocked by the proposal but then they saw this as a wonderful opportunity for their son. They were excited and pleased. When the team left, Gene had an understanding with Miguel that he would bring him to the States as soon as possible. Miguel was despondent when his “new” father left.

Next year when the team returned to complete the work on the church, Miguel was there to greet the bus. “Where is Gene?” he asked over and over. Gene didn’t join the team this year.

How do you explain what happened to Miguel’s “new” father and the broken promises?