



Mission Toolkit: Taking It Home

Your congregation has been reflecting on where God is calling you to participate in God's mission in the world. Perhaps you've identified an area of focus, have begun talking about the values you bring to mission engagement and discovered some signposts directing you to where God is calling you. So now, what's next?

In the pages that follow, we seek to provide you with some practical tools and resources that your congregation or mission organization can use to evaluate and strengthen your mission involvement. Basic questions for your church or organization to ask as you look toward discernment and seek next steps for collective action in God's mission may include:

Why do we engage in mission?

What scriptural basis do we lift up and lean on to begin to tell the story of why mission is the foundation of the church? What drives and calls our church or mission organization?

What does our mission engagement look like?

How can we have collective impact in God's mission as Presbyterians with mission partners in our church or organization, in our communities, across the U.S. and around the world?

Who is involved in our mission efforts?

Who decides what our mission focus will be? Who are our partners? How do we engage in decision-making about mission direction and engagement with partners in our church, our community and across the world? How will we develop our mission focus with cultural sensitivity, mutual dignity, awareness and partnership?

What cultural divides might we be crossing as we engage in mission?

Who will serve as a link between our church and our partners to help us navigate our mission relationship?

As your church or mission organization reflects on how you form part of God's mission and where God is calling you now or in the future, we encourage you to consider these questions and engage in continuous discernment. An in-depth assessment tool can be found in **Appendix A**, and a template for organizing your mission discernment and evaluation criteria can be found in **Appendix B**. World Mission staff are available to help your congregation evaluate its mission involvement, discern its sense of call and find a clearer focus moving forward.

For more information, contact:

Ellen Sherby
Coordinator, Equipping
for Mission Involvement
800-728-7228, ext. 5612
ellen.sherby@pcusa.org

Discerning Your Mission Focus

Discernment is best done in the context of community, like a congregation, mission committee or small group. In the process of discernment, we seek to sift,

separate or distinguish among various possibilities that are before us, helping us to know the difference between a strong desire and a true sense of call.

The discernment process requires that we think, learn, pray and pay attention to the ways that different paths resonate with who we are in light of God's mission.

Think

As you begin your discernment path, consider the following questions:

Where does your congregation already have connections, both near and far?

- Where are members in your congregation from?
- Where are people in your community from?
- Does your church have historic connections to mission in a particular place?
- Are members of your congregation now connected to mission in a particular place?
- What local mission efforts does your congregation engage in?
- Do they concern a certain topic, focus, people group or part of the world?

What does your congregation bring to mission involvement (gifts and needs)?

- What makes your congregation unique?
- What skills do members of your congregation have to share?
- What is missing in the life of your congregation?

What burdens are on the hearts of people in your congregation?

- Is there a concern for a particular place in the world?
- Are members of your congregation interested in the needs of particular groups, such as vulnerable children, abused women, those who are hungry or people living in fragile ecosystems?
- Does a particular focus spark interest in your congregation, such as poverty alleviation, evangelism, reconciliation, education, medical mission, water projects or eco-justice?

Learn

As you continue your discernment, gather information, such as:

Where are there global communities that are yearning for a partnership?

What might such a partnership look like?

Contact your denominational mission offices to learn more.

Where are other congregations in your community engaged in mission?

Contact your local ecumenical partners to learn of their involvement.

What needs do potential partners perceive in their community?

Contact your denominational mission offices, mission workers or global church connections to learn more.

How do the members of your congregation believe themselves to be called?

Contact your church leaders or denominational research offices to design a survey or listening process for your congregation.

How do the members of your community believe your congregation is called?

Contact your church leaders or denominational research offices to design a survey or listening process for your community partners.

Pray

As you continue in discernment, commit to one or more of the following:

Gather monthly for prayer in community, using a process like Lectio Divina to hear God's Word.

Invite church members to commit to daily prayer, Scripture reading and silence.

Encourage church leaders to integrate prayer for discernment into weekly worship services.

Looking to Quaker tradition, organize a "clearness committee" for your mission committee. Invite a small, trusted group to engage your committee by asking honest questions about your group's sense of call and process of discernment.

Pay Attention

As you walk the path of discernment, look for signs of God's calling:

God's Peace—a sense of confidence at a very deep level that indicates you are moving in the right direction.

Joy—a sense of energy that indicates the presence of the Spirit.

Persistence—a sense of energy that indicates the presence of the Spirit.

Convergence—a sense that the various questions or pieces of information suddenly come together and make sense.

Fruitfulness—a sense of encouragement—be it ever so small—along the way.

The path of discernment takes different shapes and lengths of time. Some may perceive their call quickly, while others take several years. Through intentional thinking, learning, praying and noticing, your way—the way to which God is calling you—will become clear. Using these tools, sift among the many opportunities available and discern the shape of God's particular call to your community.

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