

Eight Steps to Make Your Mission Committee More Effective

1 Get centered

Rather than form another committee, take the time to build a missional community. This requires study, reflection, shared spiritual practices (worship, Bible study, fasting, prayer, missional “work-days,” witnessing, advocacy, etc.).

2 Guard against “mishmash mission”

Carefully craft an overall mission objective for your congregation that can serve as the guiding principle against which all proposed activities are assessed. “Write the vision; make it plain” (Hab. 2:2). With clarity of purpose, you will find that people will be drawn to that vision.

3 Seek information

Network with others to access the information, contacts, insights and experiences your congregation needs. Check out pcusa.org/worldmission, the PC(USA) mission networks at pcusa.org/missionnetworks, PC(USA) partnership facilitators and regional liaisons, or contact Ellen Sherby at ellen.sherby@pcusa.org.

4 Assess your congregation’s relationship with local Christians

The practice of partnership guides our whole connectional church. It guides us individually as members, officers and pastors. It guides us collectively as congregations, presbyteries, synods, General Assembly ministries and related institutions. The “Presbyterians Do Mission in Partnership” document, available

at pcusa.org/partnership, paraphrases a policy statement adopted by the 215th General Assembly (2003) regarding mission in partnership. Doing mission in partnership is tough because it “keeps us honest” and forces us to see ourselves through our neighbor’s eyes. This allows us to avoid triumphalism and stay connected with Christ’s model of missional humility, so powerfully portrayed in Jesus’ washing of the disciples’ feet (John 13) and the “Christ Hymn” (Phil. 2:5–11).

5 Involve long-term mission personnel in your congregation’s mission program

Read some of the hundreds of “Mission Connections” letters written by Presbyterian mission co-workers to their supporting congregations by visiting pcusa.org/missionconnections.

6 Attend to the balance of two critically important aspects of a congregational mission program:

Global–National–Local

As we involve ourselves more fully in God’s mission, we begin to see the connections between human need, wars and suffering . . . and our own lifestyle and consumer choices. To avoid this reality is to avoid God’s mission, which is as transforming to the “sent one” as to the people who receive the missionary. How does your mission trip to Guatemala engage your people in ministry to Guatemalan migrants in your own town when you return? (or similarly, international students or new immigrant fellowships?)

Compassion–Peace–Justice

These three elements have formed the three legs of Presbyterian mission since 1837. Our love for people leads us toward ministering to their human needs, sharing God’s love with them in word and deed, and addressing the underlying structures that keep them from living the abundant life Jesus promised. Does your mission outreach favor one aspect of mission over the others?

7 Identify and address the power dynamic present in your mission relationships

Power is often the “elephant in the room” at the typical mission encounter, and American Presbyterians are often the wealthiest people in the room. Previous groups may have already burned bridges by giving away many things or promising gifts, scholarships and aid. If your mission encounter moves too quickly to money, your relationship will have difficulty getting out of that deep rut.

8 Critically reflect on the role of short-term mission (STM)

Are your congregation’s trips actually helping to respond to the needs of God’s people in the world and transform your congregation into a more missional community? See page 16 for more on short-term mission trips and page 17 for best practices in short-term mission.

Next Steps for Your Engagement

Consider the following questions as you reflect on ways to integrate your learning into your congregational mission work or mission organization context.

How do I see my church, network or organization connecting to the work of Presbyterian World Mission?

Who in my congregation, network or organization might have particular interest in learning more about Presbyterian World Mission?

Youth: _____

Adults: _____

What forum might work well for presenting information about Presbyterian World Mission at my church or with my network or organization?

What would an ideal mission connection look like in/for my church, network or organization?

What information or resources do I need in order to continue in discernment?

NOTE:

See **Appendix A**, “*Measure Your Mission! Mission Assessment Tool*” and **Appendix B**, “*Mission Evaluation Template*.”

For help concerning these and additional questions about connecting your congregation, network or mission organization with World Mission, contact:

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