

**THAT ALL MAY BE ONE....
SO
THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE**

50 YEARS OF
GLOBAL MISSION
PRACTICE AND THINKING

**IN THE
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

Compiled and Edited by: Mary Schaller Blaufuss
Wider Church Ministries/
Common Global Ministries Board

2007
in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the
United Church of Christ



V. Mission as Reconciliation

A focusing biblical text: Revelation 21: 1, 5:

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more....And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’”

A focusing biblical text: Matthew 5: 14-16:

“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Description of Mission as Reconciliation

The scope of mission continues to expand so that not only all of the human world, but all of creation is considered the object and subject of God’s mission. The interrelatedness of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation (JPIC) provides the web in which this wholistic mission operates. This emphasis calls for discernment between unjust structures needing to be replaced and the disrupted creation and situations that call for a restoration of wholeness, repaired relationships and healing.

Reconciliation as a mission emphasis engages hurting people and situations of oppression for the purpose of promoting peace with justice. Reconciliation as a foci encourages concrete steps toward the communion of all of humanity and creation with God and one another.



BEGINNING

The following study is designed for use in two ways. One is to present an overview of all the mission emphases together in one session. You can begin with reflection questions on the focusing Scriptures text, and then introduce the description of each section. Use the attached cards in the Appendix by copying materials associated with each emphasis on the same color paper and presenting them one color/emphasis at a time. The teaching aid of beads and pipe cleaners can help participants see how the mission emphases are different, but also how they intersect and present themselves in different ways at different times, places, perspectives and people – not one replacing another, but all functioning in some way at all times. (As each mission emphasis is introduced, have participants place beads on their pipe cleaners and finally shape that pipe cleaner and beads in a way that they perceive symbolizes mission today. At the end of the session, allow participants to reflect on why they shaped their symbol as they did.) Singing suggested hymns also serves to illustrate particular mission emphases. This way of using the study materials acts as an introduction to these mission emphases and helps illustrate their relationship with one another. Continuities and discontinuities may be more easily recognized in a single session.

The second use for this study is to enable participants to interact more deeply with particular mission emphases by spending an entire session or sessions on one mission emphasis. For this purpose, each mission emphasis is introduced by

(a) focusing biblical references often used in relation to this emphasis (b) a portion of a text from a large ecumenical meeting (with references to the longer text) for those seeking further understanding and (c) a reference to a representative section of a UCC document or UCBWM publication that indicates how the UCC sought to embody this mission emphasis in partnerships and work throughout the world. It also shows how UCC members were active in the leadership of the ecumenical movement, helping to influence ecumenical thinking and action throughout the world.

Each of the resources is accompanied by reflection questions that help participants explore the meaning and action of these mission emphases and to integrate them into envisioning mission today and into the future.

Materials needed:

For one session overview:

Bible
Biblical quotations printed on table place cards – same color for each emphasis
Descriptions of each mission emphasis printed on table place cards – same color for each emphasis
Pipe cleaners
Beads

Multiple Sessions:

Historic materials from participants for creating the political/social context of the period
Suggestion: Use this study in conjunction with the UCC 50th Anniversary Video “Yesterday’s Visionaries; Today’s Voices” to set the historical context for each section.

[This study guide utilizes historic texts that sometimes include language that is non-gender inclusive. This language has been kept here to reflect the language of the time when it was written.]

IV. Mission as Economic Liberation and Cultural Identity

A focusing biblical text: Luke 4: 16-21

“When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’” And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’”

Description of Mission as Economic Liberation and Cultural Identity

This mission emphasis assumes God’s mission is directly in the world and recognizes interconnected global realities and relationships. An increasing breadth of what mission includes leads to more emphasis on identifying root causes of problems.

God’s action is identified especially among people in situations of political and economic oppression who live in the peripheries of society. Also in this emphasis, racial and ethnic identity are recognized as interconnected with such oppression and thus identity is integral to liberation. Key terms such as justice, liberation, solidarity, accompaniment, indigenization, inculturation, contextualization, and local theologies become important.

INTRODUCTION

The UCC and Ecumenical Mission

III. Toward More Mutual Relationships in the Global Church

A focusing biblical text: Philippians 2: 5-8

“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross.”

Description of More Mutual Relationships in the Global Church

God’s mission in the world in which the whole church participates in a context of new nations, creates the context for an intentional re-examination of the role of partnerships and relations among churches and people in different parts of the world. For mission organizations in the West, used to ‘being in charge’ a realization that the church is global and diverse means a challenge to re-direct the starting point and practice of mission.

From its beginnings as a union church to its continued identity that seeks to be a church that is united and uniting; multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-racial; just peace; open and affirming; and accessible to all in order to serve a “Still Speaking God,” the United Church of Christ has embodied a commitment to integrate church and mission. In the introduction to the series of the *Living Theological Heritage of the United Church of Christ*, Barabara Brown Zikmund notes that “The United Church of Christ was created out of a mid-twentieth century ecumenical passion to heal the divisions of the Christian church.”¹ The commitments brought into that union from the four predecessor denominations and the multitude of diverse groups that form the heritage of the United Church of Christ, center on mission in the broad sense of that term. The editors of the “Outreach and Diversity” volume of the *Living Theological Heritage* claim that contemporary outreach attitudes and activities are a coalescence of common strands in the merging traditions. “In fact, the merger of these quite different denominations may have been possible only because they shared similar histories and theologies of outreach.”²



By its history and identity, the United Church of Christ is ecumenical in the way it engages in mission. All four merging denominations were charter members of the Federal Council of Churches in the United States. Members of these churches experienced opportunities for global commitment and cooperation through early twentieth century ecumenical movements of the International Missionary Council, the Life and Work Movement and the Faith and Order Movement. In 1948, the Life and Work Movement and the Faith and Order Movement came together to form the World Council of Churches with the stated purpose to “call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe.”³



In 1961, the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches at New Delhi, India affirmed that unity is “God’s gift and our task” and that the church is called continually to make its essential unity more visible in fellowship, witness and service. At the same Assembly, the International Missionary Council merged with the World Council of Churches to structurally demonstrate the integration of church and mission.

II. God’s Mission in the World – “The Church in Mission is the Church for Others”

A focusing biblical text: Exodus 3: 7-12

Then God said, “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.” But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’ God said, ‘I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.’”

Description of “the Church for Others”

The growing closeness of the Church and mission means that the whole Church and every part of the Church is involved in mission. The location of God’s mission is deemed to be the world. An interpretation of world events is a determining factor for mission because the world is the locus of the continuing encounter between God and humanity. Instead of the Church as a starting point for the action of mission that involves God and moves to the world, God is understood as the instigator of mission directly in the world. God invites the Church to participate in that mission.

APPENDIX

I. *Missio Dei* (God's Mission)

A focusing biblical text: John 17: 20-21

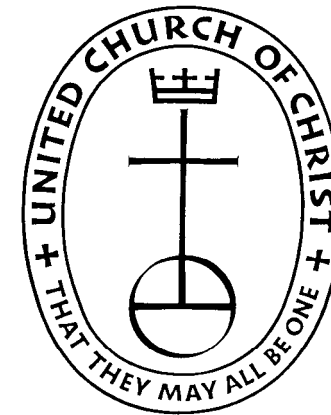
"I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

Description of *Missio Dei*

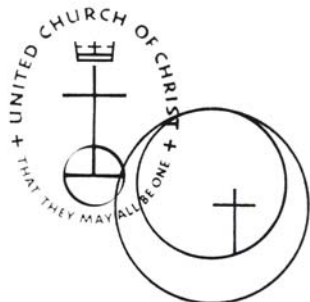
The United Church of Christ was birthed in a time when church union and efforts for visible church unity was understood as "for the sake of mission." The mission theology expressed in the Latin *Missio Dei* articulates the belief that mission is God's mission and we are God's instruments in that mission. The starting point of *Missio Dei* is a Trinitarian God: mission is the purpose and action of the triune God. The internal relationships of the Trinity also embody the way God acts in the world.

This has been embraced to the extent that to call something "ecumenical" today often reminds Christians of the unity and mission of the church all over the world.⁴ [Summaries of ecumenical mission conferences of the International Missionary Council help give context to the formation of the WCC in 1948 and the integration of the IMC and WCC in 1961. <http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/mission/hist-e.html>].

The United Church of Christ has been intimately involved in all of these ecumenical bodies and efforts. The "birth" of the United Church of Christ in 1957 was an embodiment of contemporary ecumenical discussions on the nature of visible unity that stressed structural unity. The United Church of Christ is one of several union churches throughout the world that were thus formed. Leaders in the United Church of Christ also served and continue to serve in leadership of World Council of Churches and National Council of Churches bodies. The depth to which the United Church of Christ in its own union in 1957 identified with the goals of the ecumenical movement is parallel to the World Council of Churches' Constitution use of the words of Jesus' prayer in John 17 "That all may be one...that the world may believe." The logo adopted to express UCC identity shows the cross and orb as integral to the world surrounded by the words from Jesus' prayer.



Following the merger that created the United Church of Christ in 1957, the United Church Board for World Ministries was officially established in 1961 as a merger of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions of the Congregational Christian Churches, the Board of International Missions of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the service agencies of both denominations, the Evangelical and Reformed Commission on World Service and the Congregational Christian Service Committee. It continues the legacy of the 1812 Charter that formed the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. This 1961 merger was an important step in drawing together the church and mission so that mission was seen as the responsibility of the church as a whole, not only of interested individual Christians working together.



Almost as soon as the 1961 merger forming the United Church Board for World Ministries was consummated, joint action for mission between the global mission bodies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ became active. Emerging out of common ecumenical and missional commitments, the Division of Overseas Mission of the Disciples and the United Church Board for World Ministries sought ways to work together and began to explore a possible administrative merger of the agencies. Joint area offices were created and joint missionary appointments were made with common global partners. The formation of the Common Global Ministries Board in 1996 structurally committed the two churches to joint programming and budget decisions. With the restructure of the United Church of Christ in 2000, the Common Global Ministries Board became an integral part of Wider Church Ministries.

NOTES

¹Barbara Brown Zikmund, ed., The Living Theological Heritage of the United Church of Christ (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1995– 200_), xi.

²Barbara Brown Zikmund, ed. , The Living Theological Heritage of the United Church of Christ (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2000), vol. 5, Outreach and Diversity, ed. Margaret Lambert Bendroth, Lawrence N. Jones, and Robert A. Schneider, 1.

³*Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches*, <http://www.oikoumene.org/index.php?id=2297>.

⁴ Barbara Brown Zikmund, ed. , The Living Theological Heritage of the United Church of Christ (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2001), vol. 6, Growing Toward Unity, ed. Elisabeth Slaughter Hilke, 3.

⁵Stephen Neill, A History of Christian Missions, , (London: Pelican Books, 1964; reprint, London: Penguin Books, 1986), 477.

**“That All May Be One...So the World May Believe”
50 Years of Global Mission Practice and Thinking in the
United Church of Christ**

The study materials in this booklet are intended as a resource to help you identify and interact with major emphases in global mission thinking and practice that these structures embodied during the first fifty years of the United Church of Christ. It presents connections between the wider ecumenical movement and the United Church of Christ, in particular through the instrumentality of the United Church Board for World Ministries and the later Common Global Ministries Board of the UCC and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Five primary mission foci are presented to help you examine mission emphases during these past 50 years. They are:

- 1 *Missio Dei* (God’s Mission)
2. God’s Mission in the World – “The Church in Mission is the Church for Others”
3. Toward More Mutual Relationships in the Global Church
4. Mission as Economic Liberation and Cultural Identity
5. Mission as Reconciliation

The foci are woven together in different ways at different times, pulling in new strands and putting others to the side at times. Most of the emphases highlighted here appear in some way in earlier as well as later documents, demonstrating their continued interrelatedness. This study is an attempt to pull apart the strands to examine them individually; to highlight their connections in the past; and to examine them in light of today’s context. The hope is that this resource will aid in visioning mission for the future.

In covenant with partner churches, DOM and WCM affirm a shared life in Jesus Christ. Sharing life in partnership with other churches and ecumenical bodies through *acompanamiento* (being there in various forms and modes of presence) is the cornerstone of our global life and witness. It is for the sake of Christian unity and mission that we join in covenant with others to witness to God’s love in the world.
(CGMB Standing Rules, November 2004)



The Strategic Directions

Relying on the leading of God’s Spirit, the CGMB is responding in faith to the challenge of a rapidly changing world by adopting a strategic approach emphasizing Critical Presence in all phases of its mission. We understand Critical Presence to be timely and appropriately meeting God’s people and creation at the point of deepest need: spiritually, physically, emotionally, and/or economically.

In our strategic approach, priority will be given to ministries of *acompanamiento* (being there in various forms and modes of presence) to and with people in critical situations, which may include: pastoral ministries related to fear and hopelessness where people are desperate for meaning; dangerous or life-threatening situations related to social, economic, or political realities; partners living in countries wherein the Christian faith is a minority faith; interfaith relations; conflict transformation and resolution; and areas where CGMB can offer a distinctive presence.

Direction #1 – Nurturing Human Community: Persons in Mission, Partnerships, and Programs

Direction #2 – Thinking Locally, Acting Globally

Direction #3 – Restoring the Environment and Economics to the Service of God

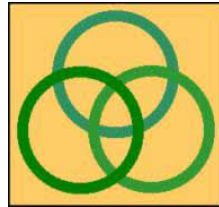
I. Missio Dei (God's Mission)

A focusing biblical text: John 17: 20-21

"I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

Reflection Questions:

1. Describe the action and nature of God in this text
2. What are the implications of this understanding of God for the church and the world?
3. How does this understanding of God, the church and the world shape the practice of mission?



Description of Missio Dei

The United Church of Christ was birthed in a time when church union and efforts for visible church unity was understood as "for the sake of mission." The mission theology expressed in the Latin *Missio Dei* articulates the belief that mission is God's mission and we are God's instruments in that mission. The starting point of *Missio Dei* is a Trinitarian God: mission is the purpose and action of the triune God. The internal relationships of the Trinity also embody the way God acts in the world. The church, as a community of God's followers, becomes an instrument of God rather than the proprietor of the action. Mission then moves from something that churches do for the sake of God, to understanding the very nature of God as missionary and sending. It changes missions in the plural as if every church has a mission to mission in the singular. Because God is one, mission is one. In 1964 Stephen Neill, a mission historian from Britain wrote in his book *A History of Christian Missions*: "The age of missions ended. The age of mission began."⁵

"The Mission of the Common Global Ministries Board"



The Common Global Ministries Board (CGMB) of the United Church of Christ Wider Church Ministries (WCM) and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Division of Overseas Mission (DOM) was formalized in 1996. The Guiding Principles and Strategic Directions of the CGMB articulate the broad-based mission emphasis of reconciliation and seek to implement that through a "Critical Presence" priority as adopted by the CGMB.

Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles emerge from a fundamental mission commitment to a shared life in Christ, and to an ecumenical global sharing of resources and prophetic vision of a just, sustainable, and peaceful world order, joining with God's concern for the poor and oppressed.

1. Within covenantal bonds with other partner churches and ecumenical bodies throughout the world, we commit ourselves in Christ to share life, resources and needs.
2. As part of the ecumenical church and its response to particular historical and geographical contexts, we affirm our commitment to share persons in mission.
3. We commit ourselves to discovering and sharing exciting new ways to sing the song of faith...hearing, telling and participating in the story of God's love in Jesus Christ.
4. Relying upon God's grace, we commit ourselves to share in God's healing of God's continuing creation.
5. Recognizing the freedom of God's Spirit to act in diverse ways, we commit ourselves to engage in dialogue, witness and common cause with people of other faiths and movements with whom we share a vision of peace, justice and the integrity of creation.

As an adolescent of small physical size, he struggled in prison. There were attempts by guards to make him a “slave” of one of the criminals in the adult section. Let us say that he had a grim time.



And yet after all this Thulani is the first to call for forgiveness for everyone on both sides, white and black. As he put it, ‘It was the white soldiers who were trying to cart me away, but it was also a white sympathizer who helped me develop leadership skills in the UDF.’ While coping with extreme hardship in prison, he converted to Christianity, studied hard and passed the high school equivalency. This year he has helped me as a translator in an informal theological education outreach project. He has won the respect and confidence of all the pastors in the group.

How have these students managed to do so well, especially given the Eurocentric content and methodology of so much of what we teach at the university? I suspect it is because of something deep down in the human spirit, something in all of us, which resists dehumanization, which cries out for justice, which yearns to make the world a better place. Thulani’s spirit is....born of suffering, but it is the spirit of new life.” (*Whole Earth Newsletter*, Summer 1996, 5).

At the same time, *Missio Dei* causes the church to understand its very purpose as missionary. The church is both an object and the subject of mission. Unity is an embodiment of the mission of God that creates the church and works in the world. At the same time, the practice of mission is integral to a church that receives its purpose from this missionary God.



Illustrating Hymns

“The Church’s One Foundation”
“In Christ There Is No East or West”

Ecumenical Meetings That Describe Missio Dei:

Reflection Guides:

1. Outline world events during the 1940s, 50s and early 60s.
2. Identify the role of the Church in mission from these excerpts.
3. Describe the purpose of mission in *Missio Dei* presented in these excerpts.
4. Discuss the positive and negative aspects of this emphasis of mission.

A. Toronto Statement of the World Council of Churches, 1950

“...What the World Council of Churches Is...

#6. Since the very *raison d’etre* of the Church is to witness to Christ, churches cannot meet together without seeking from their common Lord a common witness before the world. This will not always be possible. But when it proves possible thus to speak or act together, the churches gratefully accept it as God’s gracious gift that in spite of their disunity he has enabled them to render one and the same witness and that they may thus manifest something of the unity, the purpose of which is precisely ‘that the world may believe’ and that they may ‘testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.’ (<http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/ecumenical/ts-e.html>).

B. International Missionary Council (IMC), Willingen, 1952

Summary

“Under the threat of events in China to the traditional mission enterprise, delegates rediscovered that mission depends first and foremost on God’s own activity. Mission is the purpose and action of the triune God. Willingen is rightly considered to have had the most lasting influence on the ecumenical mission theology. Indeed, the idea of *Missio Dei* that was taken up in the follow-up of Willingen proved to be most creative. The strong emphasis on the centrality of the church in mission (important since Tambaram) was replaced by an enlarged perspective that allowed an interpretation of world events as determining factors for mission.” (<http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/mission/hist-e.html#4>)

C. World Council of Churches Second Assembly, Evanston, 1954

Faith and Order Report

“Our Oneness in Christ and our Disunity as Churches”



But all this cannot be asserted without understanding that the unity given to the Church in Christ, and gifts given to the Church to help and enable it to manifest its given unity, are not for the sake of the Church as an historical society, but for the sake of the world. The Church has its being and its unity in the ‘Son of Man, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many.’ The being and unity of the Church belong to Christ and therefore to His mission, to His enduring the Cross for the joy that was set before Him. Christ wrought ‘one new man’ for us all by His death, and it is by entering into His passion for the redemption of a sinful and divided world that the Church finds its unity in its crucified and risen Lord.” (Faith and Order Report, Second Assembly of the World Council Of Churches, Evanston, 1954, New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1955, 85)

B. General Synod 17 Priority Goal Statement: Integrity of Creation, Justice and Peace—Summary

“This priority goal statement includes a call for an end to war and for the establishment of new policies and structures of justice and common security from violence. It affirms *shalom* as central to the Christian identity of the United Church of Christ; calls for strengthening spiritual nurture, theological reflection, education, organizing action and advocacy; recognizes the interrelatedness of economic, racial and social justice, an end to war, hunger, poverty and economic exploitation and creating a sustainable environment that balances full and equal human development with the protection of the ecosystem. It calls for the establishment, locally and globally, of new policies – structures of justice, common security from violence and stewardship of all of God’s creation: human, natural and spiritual.” (UCC General Synod, 7/2/89, p. 32)

C. How We see it From Here: Jack and Lydia Johnson-Hill, theological staff at the University of Durban-Westville, South Africa, 1996.

(Jack writes of a student who has a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation.)

“Almost all our students were also young children during one of the most turbulent times in South Africa’s recent history – the 1984-86 uprisings in which hundreds of children were killed, thousands were injured and over 100,000 were detained or jailed. One of my favorites, Thulani, tells of a time when he was chased by soldiers because he was wearing a T-shirt with the word “Soweto” on it (commemorating the 1976 Soweto uprisings in which 176 children were killed).

They tried to persuade him to get into the police van voluntarily, but he managed to talk his way out of it by drawing on skills he’d learned as a United Democratic Front (UDF) freedom fighter. [Later arrested while trying to get UDF militants out of the country into exile] he was in prison for four years and then released early for good behavior shortly after Mandela and others were released.

United Church of Christ and United Church Board for World Ministries Documents:

Reflection Guides:

1. Identify themes in the following documents that demonstrate how the United Church of Christ attempts to embody and reflect ecumenical mission emphases.
2. How do these themes and actions affect the identity of the United Church of Christ?
3. Do you see these emphases in the action of mission today (and into the future)?



A. Mission Statement adopted by United Church of Christ, General Synod 16

“Mission is – to embody God’s love for all people – to join oppressed and troubled people in the struggles from liberation and to work for justice, healing and wholeness of life. There are

a great variety of ways in which that mission can be achieved. UCC gifts are to ‘embody God’s love – to work for justice.’” (*Whole Earth Newsletter*, Fall 1988, 9).

Scott Libbey, Executive Vice President of UCBWM, Reflections on the particular role of the UCBWM in light of the UCC Mission Statement

“Mission is whole in the proclaiming of the word and in the presence of service and actions of justice and love....in a missionary personality there as an embodiment of love and in support and provision of resources by which the quality of life for all people is improved with healing and hope honestly shared.” (*Whole Earth Newsletter*, Fall 1988, 9).

United Church of Christ and United Church Board for World Ministries Documents:

Reflection Guides:

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A. “Message to the Churches from the United General Synod” by General Synod of the United Church of Christ, June 25, 1957

“Active participation in both the National Council of Churches in the USA and the World Council of Churches has been an expression of the concern on the part of both of the unity groups. Now united, but recognizing that we are still under the judgment of an unfinished task, we pledge a continuance of that participation.

...We remind our membership that the union of churches is in itself an empty objective save as it is made the means of conveying Christ’s redemptive purpose to man in the realms both of personal and social life...broadening and deepening of God’s kingdom in and among all men. We hold that when a church extends its duties only to its own members and associates, it has fallen away from the principal end of its institution; its very purpose on the human side is to edify the Church Universal, making disciples of all nations through a vital and enlightened missionary program.

...A thousand new relationships must yet be woven into the fabric of the UCC. This cannot be without pain and tribulation; but with every day of patience and imaginative courage marking the emergence of the completed pattern, the time will come when our union shall be communion fulfilled in Christ.” (*Plain Dealer*, Cleveland, Ohio, in *Living Theological Heritage*, vol. 6, *Growing Toward Unity*, 751).

B.

**Rev. Fred Hoskins (President, United Church of Christ),
“A Union of Trust, A Union with Faith, A Union of Hope,
A Union for Mission” at General Synod of the United
Church of Christ, Tuesday, June 25, 1957**

“We want to publish to the world that we are nerved by faith, that we are secured by hope, that we are poised by our mutual trust, and further, we are impatient to press forward to prosecute the mission of the Church. It is the mission of the Church to be the tool for a divine penetration of the world. The Church is under orders to confront and penetrate with the gospel of Jesus Christ every dimension of life. Overseas ministry, homeland witness, social action, religious education, evangelism, stewardship, divide the mission up as you will, call the parts what you may, there still is but one mission for the Church. It is the mission which God endorsed by the resurrection, the same one upon which God sent Jesus Christ....” (Living Theological Heritage, vol. 6, *Growing Toward Unity*, 736-8).



become conscious of our own tendency to reinforce barriers by excluding and marginalizing on grounds such as race, caste, gender, disability or by tolerating the continuation of oppressive practices within our own societies and our own churches. Halfway through the ‘Decade to Overcome Violence,’ we realize anew that the call to non-violence and reconciliation stands at the heart of the Gospel message. As a global gathering, we are challenged by the violence inflicted by the forces of economic globalization, militarism, and by the plight of the marginalized people, especially the indigenous communities and peoples uprooted by migration....

But the road to reconciliation and healing is not an easy one. It involves listening, truth-telling, repentance, forgiveness and a sincere commitment to Christ and his justice. For this reason, we have explored a range of ways by which the healing power of God is made available to us. These include the healing that takes place through prayer, ascetical practices and the charisms of healing, through sacraments and healing services, through a combination of medical and spiritual, social and systemic approaches, and through sensing the sustaining presence of the Holy Spirit, even when we accept and continue to struggle with illness and traumas....

But God calls us to be a community of hope. “Called in Christ to be healing and reconciling communities,” we have continued here in Athens the task of defining the kind of community God desires us to become, a community that bears witness to the gospel in word and deed; that is alive in worship and learning; proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all; that offers young people leadership roles; that opens its doors to strangers and welcomes the marginalized within its own body; that engages with those who suffer, and with those who struggle for justice and peace; that provides services to all who are in need; that recognizes its own vulnerability and need for healing; and that is faithful in its commitment to the wider Creation. We pray that the Holy Spirit will breathe healing power into our lives, and that together we may move forward into the blessed peace of the new creation....”

(http://oikoumene.org/PLEN_14_May_-_Letter_from.1025.0.html)

**B. World Council of Churches Assembly,
Canberra, Australia, 1991**

Theme: “Come, Holy Spirit – Renew the Whole Creation.”

“The purpose of the Church is to unite people with Christ in the power of the Spirit, to manifest communion in prayer and action and thus to point to the fullness of communion with God, humanity and the whole creation in the glory of the kingdom...The calling of the Church is to proclaim reconciliation and provide healing, to overcome divisions based on race, gender, age, culture, colour and to bring all people into communion with God...” (*The Unity of the Church: Gift and Calling—The Canberra Statement*, 1991, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/faith-and-order-commission/20-02-91>).

C. Conference on World Mission and Evangelism of the WCC, “A Letter from Athens to the Christian Churches, Networks and Communities — Come Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile: Called in Christ to be Reconciling and Healing Communities,” Athens (Greece) 9-16 May 2005

“We stand now at a particular moment in the history of mission. While the centres of power are still predominantly in the global North, it is in the South and the East that the churches are growing most rapidly, as a result of faithful Christian mission and witness. The missional character of the Church is experienced in greater diversity than ever, as the Christian communities continue the search for distinctive responses to the Gospel. This diversity is challenging, and it can sometimes make us uneasy. Nevertheless, within it we have discovered opportunities for a deepening understanding of the Holy Spirit’s creative, life-sustaining, healing and reconciling work...”

In Athens we were deeply aware of the new challenges that come from the need for reconciliation between East and West, North and South, and between Christians and people of other faiths. We have become painfully aware of the mistakes of the past, and pray that we may learn from them. We have

**II. God’s Mission in the World –
“The Church in Mission is the Church for Others”**

A focusing biblical text: Exodus 3: 7-12

Then God said, “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.” But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’ God said, ‘I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.’”

Reflection Questions:

1. Describe the action and nature of God in this text.
2. What are the implications of this understanding of God for the church and the world?
3. How does this understanding of God, the church and the world shape the practice of mission?

Description of “the Church for Others”

The growing closeness of the Church and mission means that the whole Church and every part of the Church is involved in mission. The location of God’s mission is deemed to be the world. An interpretation of world events is a determining factor for mission because the world is the locus of the continuing encounter between God and humanity. Instead of the Church as a starting point for the action of mission that involves God and moves to the world, God is understood as the instigator of mission directly in the world. God invites the Church to participate in that mission.



This places much more importance on interaction with secular justice and development movements than previous church-initiated mission emphases. Mission in this emphasis necessitates the church's participation in secular programs for urban renewal, civil rights, and humanization. A 1966 study project sponsored by the International Missionary Council articulated goals of mission as "shalom" and "humanization." This was especially poignant in a world context moving to a new era of colonialism. Many new nations were emerging from 19th-20th century colonial territories. With these new understandings of geography, colonial legacies and interfaith relations, mission also recognizes that the boundaries between Christian and non-Christian lands are nuanced by new missionary frontiers between belief and unbelief within every country.

Illustrating Hymns

"Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life"

"We Would Be Building"

Ecumenical Meetings That Describe "Church for Others":

Reflection Guides:

1. Outline world events during the 1960s – early 70s.
2. Identify the role of the Church in mission from these excerpts.
3. Describe the purpose of mission presented in these excerpts.
4. Discuss the positive and negative aspects of this emphasis of mission.

A. World Council of Churches Third Assembly, New Delhi, 1961

"The integration of the IMC and the WCC brings into being a new instrument of common consultation and action to serve the Churches in their missionary task under the new conditions of the second half of the twentieth century. In it we see the good



Four Commitments Suggested by the Act of Covenant

1. For a just economic order on local, national, regional and international levels for all people; for liberation from the foreign debt bondage that affects the lives of hundreds of millions of people. We commit ourselves to work and to engage our churches to work...
2. For the future security of all nations and peoples; for the demilitarization of international relations; against militarism and national security doctrines and systems; for a culture of non-violence as a force for change and liberation. We commit ourselves to work and to engage our churches to work...
3. For building a culture that can live in harmony with creation's integrity; for preserving the gift of the earth's atmosphere to nurture and sustain the world's life; for combating the causes of destructive changes to the atmosphere which threaten to disrupt the earth's climate and create widespread suffering. We commit ourselves to work and to engage our churches to work...
4. For the eradication of racism and discrimination on national and international levels for all people; for the breaking down of walls which divide people because of their ethnic origin; for the dismantling of the economic, political and social patterns of behaviour that perpetuate and allow individuals to consciously and unconsciously perpetuate the sin of racism. We commit ourselves to work and to engage our churches to work...

(Now is the Time: Final Document and Other Texts, World Convocation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, Seoul, Republic of Korea, 5-12 March 1990, Geneva: WCC-JPIC office, 1990, 12-21, 22-33.)

A. *Now is the Time: Final Document and Other Texts, World Convocation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation*, Seoul, Republic of Korea, 5-12 March 1990

JPIC is a vision of caring for all people and creation as a family where each member has the same right to a wholeness of life.

“Now is the time to commit ourselves anew to God’s justice...Now is the time when the ecumenical movement needs a greater sense of binding, mutual commitment and solidarity in word and action. It is the promise of God’s covenant for our time and our world to which we respond...Now is the time for the ecumenical movement to articulate its vision of all people living on earth and caring for creation as a family where each member has the same right to wholeness of life”

Ten Affirmations on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation

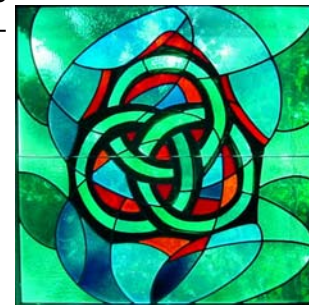
- I. We affirm that all exercise of power is accountable to God.
- II. We affirm God’s option for the poor.
- III. We affirm the equal value of all races and peoples.
- IV. We affirm that male and female are created in the image of God.
- V. We affirm that truth is at the foundation of a community of free people.
- VI. We affirm the peace of Jesus Christ.
- VII. We affirm the creation as beloved of God.
- VIII. We affirm that the earth is the Lord’s.
- IX. We affirm the dignity and commitment of the younger generation.
- X. We affirm that human rights are given by God.

hand of God leading us into the next phase of the Church’s mission. It is at the same time a fitting symbol of the fact that missionary responsibility cannot be separated from any other aspect of the Church’s life and teaching. The Church’s mission is one throughout the world, for there is but one Gospel of salvation for all men, one Savior and Lord, who is the light of the world. Today, thanks to the faithful witness of those who went before us in the missionary movement, the Christian mission has a world-wide base. Every Christian congregation is part of that mission, with a responsibility to bear witness to Christ in its own neighborhood and to share in the bearing of that witness to the ends of the earth.” (The New Delhi Report, The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches 1961, New York: Association Press, 1962, 249)

B. International Missionary Council Meeting, Mexico City, 1963

New missionary frontiers were illustrated by the theme of the 1963 IMC meeting in Mexico City ‘Witness in 6 Continents:’ “Every Christian congregation in all the world is called to show the love of God in Christ, in witness and service to the world at its doors.” It articulated the goal of mission as, “It must be a common witness of the whole church, bringing the whole Gospel to the whole world.”

United Church of Christ and United Church Board for World Ministries Documents:



Reflection Guides:

1. Identify themes in the following documents that demonstrate how the United Church of Christ attempts to embody and reflect ecumenical mission emphases.
2. How do these themes and actions affect the identity of the United Church of Christ?
3. Do you see these emphases in the action of mission today (and into the future)?

**A. Dr. Alford Carleton, Executive Vice President of the
UCBWM, “The Breadth and Depth of Mission Today,”
Keynote Address,
United Church Board for World Ministries,
October 23, 1963**

“It is becoming increasingly clear that the major problems, as well as the greatest opportunities which of course, result from two great new developments in the Christian world. The first of these is a new sense of discovery on the part of Christians everywhere—discovery of other Christians, of their problems, of the interdependence which we share, of the range of concerns which we have in common. There is, in other words, a sense of total involvement which we have never had before. We are suddenly discovering in the local congregation that the cause of ‘Missions’ is not something limited to a small Missionary Committee and concentrated upon a few distant areas the other side of the world. We are discovering that social action is not something limited to a few zealots, concentrating upon unpleasant problems in the neighborhood that we might like to leave alone. We are discovering that the question of relationships to other major religions is not one of distant philosophy but of our own youth in our colleges today. Now everyone knows that what happens to the Mission in Angola or Ceylon is of vital importance to us in our church life, that what happens in Mississippi is of vital significance to our own neighborhood, and to our Mission in South Africa; that evangelism and stewardship are not just strange words out of a religious past but vital responsibilities – in whatever terms we may express them.” (*UCBWM 152nd Annual Report, 1963*, UCC Archives, UCBWM Collection, UCC 2002.05, Appendix A, 87-88)

Globalization and the age of communication bring disparate parts of the world together in closer contact and yet exclude even more fully the invisible and vulnerable persons among us. Mission takes many forms, focusing on the sharing of life together and the creation of a just, sustainable and peaceful world order by accompanying those who are oppressed.

Reconciliation as a mission emphasis engages hurting people and situations of oppression for the purpose of promoting peace with justice. Reconciliation as a foci encourages concrete steps toward the communion of all of humanity and creation with God and one another.



Illustrating Hymns

“In the Midst of
New Dimensions”
“For the Healing of the Nations”

Ecumenical Meetings That Describe Mission as Reconciliation:

Reflection Guides:

1. Outline world events during the 1990s through the early 21st century.
2. Identify the role of the Church in mission in these excerpts.
3. Describe the purpose of mission presented in these excerpts.
4. Discuss the positive and negative aspects of this emphasis of mission.

V. Mission as Reconciliation

A focusing biblical text: Revelation 21: 1, 5:

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more....And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’”

A focusing biblical text: Matthew 5: 14-16:

“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

Reflection Questions:

1. Describe the action and nature of God in each of these texts.
2. What are the implications of these understandings of God for the church and the world?
3. How do each of these understandings of God, the church and the world shape the practice of mission?

Description of Mission as Reconciliation

The scope of mission continues to expand so that not only all of the human world, but all of creation is considered the object and subject of God’s mission. The interrelatedness of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation (JPIC) provides the web in which this wholistic mission operates. This emphasis calls for discernment between unjust structures needing to be replaced and the disrupted creation and situations that call for a restoration of wholeness, repaired relationships and healing.



B. Dr. Ben M. Herbst, (President, United Church of Christ) “Wholeness” Keynote address, United Church Board for World Ministries, November 12, 1963

“I have chosen for my theme the word “Wholeness.” I chose this theme because it seems to me that one of the imperatives of our day is to make plain the wholeness of our faith and to establish the wholeness of the Church. Negatively, I could say that the failure to achieve this wholeness has been and is now one of the reasons why the Church is no stronger than she is, why her message is no more effective, why her life is a no more potent witness. The very life of the Church, the very life of the mission, the very life of the people and the very life of the world depends on it. There is great need for wholeness.

... The unity of the faith, the unity of the Gospel, the unity of the word is one of the imperatives which we in the Church must face and face it quickly, face it courageously. Unless this Board for World Ministries is willing to say our task is to proclaim the whole Gospel, be witnesses to the whole word, be ambassadors of the whole truth, we might as well go out of business.

... The mission is one. The work of the Church is a whole mission to the whole of life.

This whole mission must be carried on by the whole Church. Now this has two aspects each of which proposes a challenge to the Church in our day. First, we are challenged to make the Church a unity. This means pursuing the ecumenical movement, breaking down these walls of partition, of segregation, that separate our churches into little competing groups when the task is so tremendous and the challenge is so gigantic that there is no time to spend on trivia. This, of course, is more evident upon the so-called mission field than upon the mission field here in America. The very fact that in other parts of the world Christianity is so much more a minority religion tends to bring groups closer together for counsel, to form a common strategy and to establish a common front.

... We need to unite our efforts and our mission because God calls us to that type of unity. It is the will of God that his children shall act as members of one family. The mission must be pursued by the whole Church. By the whole Church I mean all the people in the Church must be engaged in mission.



...And finally, the whole Church must be involved in mission to the whole world. That is where particularly the BWM comes in. The Church must come to see that what we do in Africa, Asia, or South America is no different from what we do in the US. Although we may do it in a particular fashion, though the language is different, though the circumstances into which the Gospel of Jesus Christ is introduced are different, though in other lands we work through the indigenous Church, the end is the same – to help people come to know Jesus Christ, to help them through their acquaintance with Jesus Christ to understand God’s will, to shape their lives according to that will and purpose, to understand and to live by the way God has been working in His world.” (UCBWM 153rd Annual Report, 1964, UCC Archives, UCBWM Collection, , UCC 2002.95, Appendix A, 97-99).

‘Hope is what we are living for each day, and, as for me, hope is our ongoing struggle towards God’s Shalom. It is a struggle of knowing, redefining, and working toward such a goal.’ In the first four camps, he found he often received a silent reception after sharing the story of the church in his country.



He didn’t know he said, ‘If they were serious about it, ashamed of the destruction brought by American policies in the third world, or if they just wanted to drop the subject.’ Then, in the fifth week, in a Jun-

ior Camp, after he had talked about the struggles of his country, a young girl spoke up and said, ‘Shame on us for doing bad things to your country!’ He was a bit shocked by the remark. ‘And the best thing,’ he continued, ‘was that there was another girl, an eight-year-old little girl, who said to me, ‘Will you forgive us?’ Such innocent confession moved me to tears deep inside.’ Such a statement is one that Filipinos have been eagerly waiting to hear regarding actions of the U.S. government, he said, ‘Oh, how I wished that all oppressed countries would hear such a statement. Oh, how I pray that the American government would make that statement.’ Goel felt his experience with the camp was wrapped up with such statements, made by the Junior Camp’s small group. And he saw validity in his mission here, ‘because of the hope I see now and the hope that I see in the coming future.

Truly, Jesus Christ wanted us to be like a child, a child who is willing to admit a mistake and willing to ask for forgiveness. Indeed, the door of Hope for Christ’s church is open now!...” (Whole Earth Newsletter, Fall 2000, 8).

...What do I have to give up to feel, finally, justified in the eyes of God and my sisters and brothers?...Too often...we're motivated by guilt to unload our material things and live in atonement for real or imagined sins...Look instead to liberation... (As spoken by an Australian aborigine woman) "If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." I had been thinking too much in terms of the sacrifices involved in simplifying my lifestyle, and not enough in terms of the benefits.

The conveniences that make our lives so comfortable also impoverish us. They isolate us from the most precious commodity of all: human relationships. Together, the marginalized of the world and we First World refugees ought to be able to forge a radically new future." (*Whole Earth Newsletter*, Nov. 1992, 5).

**E. Goel Bagundol, Missionary to the United States from the Philippines "Mission Shifts the Gears of Faith"
2000**

"A divine appointment that redefined my commitment and orientation of God's ministry to our youth and children," was how Goel Bagundol described his experience with the Disciples of Christ Youth and Children's Camp in Kentucky this summer. He came from the Philippines as part of the Global Ministries program to promote shared life and mutuality with our global partners.

'Faith in God is not for an individual alone, but such faith is intended for the community,' Goel said. He found that in spite of the hi-tech world we live in, most of the campers he met had no idea how other countries had been suffering...

But Goel found that his presence there, and his conversations with the campers, 'enabled them to shift the gears of the faith into a more conscious Koinonia, ' to realize that faith is present not only in this country, but also present in all the world. 'I do believe that mission is vital to opening the horizon of these children's faith, a horizon that unites them to a global community of faith.'



**C. Frederick Shepard, "Our Ministries in the Near East,"
Keynote address to Annual Meeting of Near East Mission in United Church Board For World Ministries, 1964**

"The definition of mission, given at the Aleih Conference, was that of having each individual give a Christian witness where he is – in the community, school, clinic, or office; this puts the Christian into society rather than in a small enclave. The emphasis on the importance of the witness of the layman is promising in this clergy-centered church situation..." (*UCBWM 153rd Annual Report, 1964*, UCC Archives, UCBWM Collection, UCC 2002.95, 28).

**D. Dr. Alford Carleton, Executive Vice President of UCBWM, Annual Meeting Address
United Church Board for World Ministries
November 10, 1964**

"In the third category of new adjustment to a secularized world we are deeply concerned with the studies of the forms of the ministry, of the missionary structure of the congregation, of lay leadership in the Church, and of the Church in the world. We participate in very significant experiments in industrial evangelism in the Philippines and Japan; in India, in Africa, and in Germany, especially in the great new industrial complexes growing up far from the established centers of population, and often under governments that would resist the building of churches in the conventional way. In Asia and Africa there are many ways in which the Gospel must be carried beyond the reach of the Church itself. We must pass beyond the boundary of church extension into the uncharted realm of mission to people of whatever race or creed under unfamiliar and often discouraging circumstances. That is the meaning today of the call that we 'go into all the world.'" (*UCBWM 154th Annual Report, 1965*, UCC Archives, UCBWM Collection, UCC 2002.05.155, 10-16).

III. Toward More Mutual Relationships in the Global Church

A focusing biblical text: Philippians 2: 5-8

“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross.”

Reflection Questions:

1. Describe the action and nature of God in this text
2. What are the implications of this understanding of God for the church and the world?
3. How does this understanding of God, the church and the world shape the practice of mission?

Description of More Mutual Relationships in the Global Church

God’s mission in the world in which the whole church participates in a context of new nations, creates the context for an intentional re-examination of the role of partnerships and relations among churches and people in different parts of the world.

For mission organizations in the West, used to ‘being in charge’ a realization that the church is global and diverse means a challenge to re-direct the starting point and practice of mission. An exploration of the role of missionaries; a focus on indigenous leadership development; and a re-examination of the relationship of ‘partnership’ takes place. Contextual and identity theologies specific to particular people and places and times begin to shape mission decisions and practices.

... “The second road that is closing is tribal theology,” Wilson said, “theology that says we are the norm, we have it all figured out.” Rather we need to hear what is being said out of the variety of contexts in which theology is being done today – feminist theology, black theology, minjung theology, and others. What they have in common, she suggested, was that “they start from the needs and the experience of people.” And if we start there, we may be able to move from seeing mission as crusade to a mentality of vulnerability, “walking the road of the crucified one.”

...In all this, “Christians better be doing their biblical homework,” Wilson said. “We need to be biblically literate and theologically literate. By that I mean knowing what our story is, who we are, remembering who we are as the people of God, because, if we know who we are, we are likely to know where we are to be going.” (*Whole Earth Newsletter*, Winter 1989, 1-2).



D. How We See It From Here: Rev. Robert Molsberry, Community Development Coordinator in Nicaragua, 1992

“Some kids pawed through our garbage yesterday. It was inevitable. We have the best garbage on the block in our Managua neighborhood. While our neighbors throw out banana peels and corn shucks...we throw out...jelly and peanut butter jars and two-liter plastic pop bottles. It was only a matter of time before we were found out.

...Our increasing awareness of a global mission and ministry may be what saves all of us from ourselves. As partnership relations among churches are nurtured internationally and opportunities for mutual sharing and reflection become more available, the struggles in the Philippines, like those in Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and other parts of Asia, may lift us out of our respective inwardness into a global arena where God's reign is truly experienced in the lives of people." (*Whole Earth Newsletter*, Spring 1989, 3).

C. Lois Wilson, a WCC President, "Wilson Challenges UCBWM," Annual Meeting Address, United Church Board for World Ministries, 1988

(Wilson challenges her audience to consider the changing context in the world in which we engage in mission.)



"First," she said, "is the shift in the axis of the number of Christians and the vitality of Christian faith from North America and Europe to Asia and Africa. The younger churches are no longer young. Where Christian community is growing fastest is in South Korea and in Africa." She suggested that we have things to learn from these Christians, including their perception that both Europe and North America are now mission fields, that we are seen and viewed by many in the world as exporters of violence, that in many ways we are seen as putting the Christian faith into cultural captivity to our economic systems, which exploit the Third World. She also reminded her audience that in the global context there is the "discovery of the poor being central to the message of the Gospel. The poor of the world." She added, "And your church and mine, because many of us are not poor, we have to really find ways to be in solidarity with the poor."

The terminology of "older" and "younger" churches used in the ecumenical movement during the early twentieth century to differentiate between missionary sending and receiving churches is re-examined in light of the realization that the church has been present and active in mission in many places long before Western missionary organizations became active.

A focus on inter-religious dialogue also accompanies this focus on more mutual intra-Christian relationships.

Illustrating Hymns

"Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant?"
"Partners in Christ's Service"



Ecumenical Meetings That Describe "More Mutual Relationships":

Reflection Guides:

1. Outline world events during the 1960s - 70s.
Review reflections on "The Church for Others" section.
2. Identify the role of the Church in mission in these excerpts.
3. Describe the purpose of mission presented in these excerpts.
4. Discuss the positive and negative aspects of this emphasis of mission.

The "Church for Others" document of Uppsala, 1968 includes the emphasis on "Christian Presence" as a role for missionaries and the relationship of mutual partnership. M.A.C. Warren of the Church Missionary Society of the Church of England begins to edit a "Christian Presence Series." The World Student Christian Federation during this period emphasizes incarnation as a key starting point of mission – Christ identifies with the human situation. This leads to an articulation of the role of cross-cultural missionaries in terms of "presence."

Christians are to identify with people with whom they wish to serve and witness. Missionaries engage in personal encounter with an open expectant attitude toward others. Dialogue receives a lot of attention.

The WCC Sub-Unit on Dialogue sponsors the document, “Dialogue with People of Living Faiths” which focuses on God’s movement toward wholeness and wider community. “Because they share common human aspirations and responsibility for others, Christians ought to engage in dialogue with those also concerned about ultimate questions.” Christians can thus discover God’s activity among people of other faiths.



A. “Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies, WCC, Kingston, 1979

“It is Christian faith in the Triune God – Creator of all humankind, Redeemer in Jesus Christ, revealing and renewing Spirit – which calls us Christians to human relationship with our many neighbours. Such relationship includes dialogue: witnessing to our deepest convictions and listening to those of our neighbours. It is Christian faith which sets us free to be open to the faiths of others, to risk, to trust and to be vulnerable. In dialogue, conviction and openness are held in balance....

C. Reasons for Dialogue

#16: The term ‘dialogue in community’ is useful in that it gives concreteness to Christian reflection on dialogue. Moreover it focuses attention on the reasons for being in dialogue, which can be identified in two related categories.

Most Christians today live out their lives in actual community with people who may be committed to faiths and ideologies other than their own.

To travel from one country to another in this progression, one could not help but observe shifts in the role of the church and its theological perspectives in each of those contexts. It would be too simplistic to say that the gospel became or had the potential of becoming more privatized as one moved up the economic scale because the social, political and cultural dynamics are far more complicated than that. But in a sense one could not help but wonder if the church does not run the risk of diluting the radical claims of the gospel as economic security replaces struggle.

In the Philippines, for example, church leaders refer to a theology of struggle which identifies the cross of Christ as pivotal in the Filipinos’ faith pilgrimage. The church is numerically strong, active and deeply committed to human rights. ... In Taiwan, the predominant Protestant presence is the Presbyterian Church, many of whose leaders have suffered at the hands of the government. Pastors are imprisoned for the “political” thought as the Taiwanese debate their future vis-à-vis China. Aboriginal and tribal groups are a constant reminder that economic prosperity and equality are not experienced by all...During the past few decades economic change in Taiwan and Japan has been rapid and dramatic. With hardly any natural resources and with a war-damaged economy, Japan, the producer of cheap export goods in the 1950s, now has one of the world’s strongest economies. This economic growth has been based on political systems which have been generously called “hierarchical.” Japanese governments have stressed obedience, conformity, sacrifice and hard work, as well as respect for authority. Japan is showing all the marks of a society encumbered with materialism...The Koreans in Japan suffer indignities and second-class citizenship. The Buraku people are an artificially created class of Japanese whose vocations are disdained and who do not share in the fortunes of the society. The presence of both these groups challenges the church to risk its security and abandon its refuge for a far more visible role in addressing human rights.

During the next 6 months, the military made several visits to the Betania refugees. Sometimes just a truck or two of soldiers came. Other times, entire battalions of 450 or 500 men armed with M-16s entered the camp to search for weapons and people they considered “subversives.” Each visit, regardless of its length or size, caused considerable fear among the refugee population, and after each visit I learned more about the unbelievable atrocities committed by the military which eventually cause the refugees to flee their homes.

I have no doubt at all that my role of accompaniment at Betania was much appreciated by the refugees and that my presence may likely have discouraged the military from taking greater actions against the camp residents. It is important to note that not a single Betania refugee has been captured on the premises since international volunteers have been living there.” (*Whole Earth Newsletter*, Winter, 1988, 4).



**B. Dan Romero, General Secretary, Mission Program Unit
“A Theology of Struggle or a Theology of Success”
1989**

“In making my way from the Philippines through Taiwan to Japan in March, I witnessed a steady economic progression from one country to the next. There was extreme poverty and suffering in the Philippines, signs of rapid economic growth and development in Taiwan, and stunning economic achievement in Japan. The Mangyan people of Mindoro are just one example of the poverty that pervades the tribal people in the Philippines, a people nurtured on the land but who do not share in either its current productivity or in its future potential.

They live in families sometimes of mixed faiths and ideologies; they live as neighbours in the same towns and villages; they need to build up their relationships expressing mutual human care and searching for mutual understanding. This sort of dialogue is very practical, concerned with the problems of modern life – the social, political, ecological, and above all, the ordinary and familiar.

But there are concerns beyond the local which require Christians to engage in dialogue towards the realization of a wider community in which peace and justice may be more fully realized. This leads in turn to a dialogue between communities, in which issues of national and international concern are tackled.”

#19: In this sense dialogue has a distinctive and rightful place within Christian life, in a manner directly comparable to other forms of service. But ‘distinctive’ does not mean totally different or separate. In dialogue Christians seek ‘to speak the truth in a spirit of love,’ not naively ‘to be tossed to and fro, and be carried about with every wind of doctrine’ (Eph. 4: 14-15). In giving their witness they recognize that in most circumstances today the spirit of dialogue is necessary. For this reason we do not see dialogue and the giving of witness as standing in any contradiction to one another. Indeed, as Christians enter dialogue with their commitment to Jesus Christ, time and time again the relationship of dialogue gives opportunity for authentic witness. Thus, to the member churches of the WCC we feel able with integrity to commend the way of dialogue as one in which Jesus Christ can be confessed in the world today; at the same time we feel able with integrity to assure our partners in dialogue that we come not as manipulators but as genuine fellow pilgrims, to speak with them of what we believe God to have done in Jesus Christ who has gone before us, but whom we seek to meet anew in dialogue.” (James A Scherer, Stephen Bevans, ed., *New Directions in Mission & Evangelization, Basic Statements 1974-1991*, Geneva, World Council of Churches, 1979, 16-17, 13).

B. Council for World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, Bangkok meeting, 1973

“There is an interdependence between people and nations in the world community. We need to dialogue to work together to meet human necessities, relieve human suffering, establish social justice, share in the struggle for peace.”

“This meeting became famous for its holistic approach to the theme “Salvation Today,” encompassing its spiritual as well as socio-political aspects, without favoring one over the other. Bangkok acknowledged the need for contextual theologies and recognition of cultural identity as shaping the voice of those answering and following Christ. The delegates struggled with situations of exploitation and injustice expressed also in relations between churches. In order to enable local churches in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific to set their own priorities in witness, a proposal was made of a temporary ‘moratorium’ on sending money and missionaries from the North.”

(<http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/mission/hist-e.html#8>)

United Church of Christ and United Church Board for World Ministries Documents:

Reflection Guides:

1. Identify themes in the following documents that demonstrate how the United Church of Christ attempts to embody and reflect ecumenical mission emphases.
2. How do these themes and actions affect the identity of the United Church of Christ?
3. Do you see these emphases in the action of mission today (and into the future)?

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A. How We See It From Here: Ann Lutterman: a Peace and Justice Intern in El Salvador during 1987 (on the significance of the ministry of accompaniment)

“The very first time a group of heavily-armed soldiers entered the Betania Refugee Camp where I spent 6 months as a Peace & Justice Intern, the terrified looks on the faces of my refugee friends reminded me why I was there. From the start I had been told that my primary role would be that of “acompanamiento” – the work of simply living with Salvadorans who feel threatened by the military, sharing their pain and suffering, acting as an international presence to deter the government from violating their basic human rights and serving as a witness when they did. But it wasn’t until I talked with Colonel Murcia and saw for myself how much more respect he had for me as a U.S. citizen than for his brother and sister Salvadorans that I realized how important my presence was.

**D. David Gill, ed. “Gathered for Life,” Official Report,
VI Assembly World Council of Churches,
Vancouver, Canada, 24 July – 10 August, 1983
“Witnessing in a Divided World”**

Culture: the Context for Our Witnessing

#6. While we affirm and celebrate cultures as expressing the plural wonder of God’s creation, we recognize that not all aspects of every culture are necessarily good. There are aspects within each culture which deny life and oppress people. Also emerging in our time are certain forms of religious culture and sub-cultures which are demonic because they manipulate people and project a world-view and values which are life-denying rather than life-affirming.

#7. Given on the one hand the richness and variety of cultures, and on the other the conflict between life-affirming and life-denying aspects within each culture, we need to look again at the whole issue of Christ and culture in the present historical situation.

#11. ...we now have indigenous or local expressions of the Christian faith in many parts of the world, which present more manifestations of diverse forms of Christianity. The Gospel message becomes a transforming power within the life of a community when it is expressed in the cultural forms in which the community understands itself.

#12. Therefore, in the search for a theological understanding of culture we are working toward a new ecumenical agenda in which various cultural expressions of the Christian faith may be in conversation with each other. In this encounter the theology, missionary perspectives and historical experiences of many churches, from the most diverse traditions...offer fresh possibilities. (David Gill, ed. “*Gathered for Life*,” *Official Report, VI Assembly World Council of Churches, Vancouver, Canada, 24 July – 10 August, 1983*, Geneva: WCC and Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983, 32-34, 39-41).

A. Dr. Kirk Stetson, Pierce Memorial Hospital Southern Rhodesia UCC, Role of Missionaries in Rhodesia, 1964

“Missionaries are still wanted – for some “the contribution is just being where we are. We interpret this not as our attempt to hold the status quo by force but the need of missionaries to relinquish active leadership as mentioned above. The need now is for the quiet counseling and encouragement of indigenous Christian leadership that we may work side by side with our friends here in Africa and even in subordinate positions to them as is happening in many places in our mission.” (*Missionary Herald*, November 1964, 8).



**B. Telfer Mook, Secretary for Southern Asia
“Missionary Roles: Friendship but not Identity”
January 1965**

“They can accept our friendship and admiration without expecting us to identify ourselves with them...Dr. Chandran Devanesan of Madras Christian College in India says that he wants [a missionary] to come as a representative of a different culture and civilization, bringing the best that his background can offer. And, most important he wants him in this context to join hands as fellow Christians of one worldwide fellowship. Not only is the Christian from the West welcomed because of new insights that he brings to the life of the church, but his very presence is a reminder to the Indians that the Christian Church there transcends national boundaries.” (*Missionary Herald*, January, 1965)

C. United Church Board for World Ministries 157th Annual Report, 1968

“The Board recognizes itself as a partner with churches overseas. In its relationship with overseas churches the UCBWM looks upon itself as a sharing partner, understanding well that it can never dictate. The unique history of the churches, their methods of government, peculiar weaknesses and strengths and relationships often hamper the Board’s dealings with them regarding current issues.” (*UCBWM 157th Annual Report, 1968*, UCC Archives, UCBWM Collection, UCC 2002.05.155, 11).

D. David M Stowe, Executive Vice President of UCBWM Address to Annual Meeting, United Church Board for World Ministries 1972

“Mission” means the sum of all those ways in which the Christian community becomes practically relevant to life on Planet Earth. Every major event of 1971 affected the work of the Board and was, in some measure, affected by our work. ...Board staff are deeply involved in the ecumenical debates about evangelism, dialogue with persons of other faiths, and the meaning of ‘salvation today.’ We are participating in the United Church discussions on the ‘Faith Crisis’ and the ‘Crisis in the Local Church’ and are working to keep open the lines of communication between such evangelically inclined UCC members as those in the Fellowship of Concerned Churchmen and the national structures of the church.

...While we affirm in these and many other ways the decisive importance of man’s relation to his Creator and Redeemer, we are equally aware that human brotherhood and welfare in this world are crucial.” (*UCBWM 161st Annual Report, 1972*, UCC Archives, UCBWM Collection, UCC 2002.05.155, 5-6).

- a. Conversion
- b. The Gospel to all Realms of Life
- c. The Church and its unity in God’s Mission
- d. Mission in Christ’s Way
- e. Good News to the Poor
- f. Mission in and to Six Continents

Looking Toward the Future

Whether among the secularized masses of industrial societies, the emerging new ideologies around which societies are organized, the resurging religions which people embrace, the movements of workers and political refugees, the people’s search for liberation and justice, the uncertain pilgrimage of the younger generation into a future both full of promise and overshadowed by nuclear confrontation – the Church is called to be present and to articulate the meaning of God’s love in Jesus Christ for every person and for every situation.”

(*International Review of Mission* 71: 284 (October 1982), 427-447)



C. The Gospel and Our Cultures Project

This World Council of Churches project created study materials, including a video, to help people identify the variety of cultures in which we live as Christians, attempting to celebrate the plurality of cultures created by God. (*Diverse Cultures, One Gospel*, World Council of Churches, Friendship Press Distribution Office)

To the poor this challenge means the profound assurance that God is with them and for them. To the rich it means a profound repentance and renunciation. To all who yearn for justice and forgiveness Jesus Christ offers discipleship and the demand of service. But he offers this in the assurance of victory and in sharing the power of his risen life. As the kingdom in its fullness is solely the gift of God himself, any human achievement in history can only be approximate and relative to the ultimate goal – that promised a new heaven and a new earth in which justice abides. Yet that kingdom is the inspiration and constant challenge in all our struggles.”

We wish to recommend the following to the churches:



- A. Become churches in solidarity with the struggles of the poor
- B. Join the struggle against the powers of exploitation and impoverishment
- C. Establish a new relationship with the poor inside the churches
- D. Pray and work for the kingdom of God”

(Your Kingdom Come: Mission Perspectives, Report on the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism, Melbourne, Australia, 12-25 May,

1980, Geneva: World Council of Churches– Council for World Mission and Evangelism, 1980, 171-178, 193-207).

B. Ecumenical Affirmation: Mission and Evangelism, WCC Central Committee, 1982 Ecumenical Convictions

“In the ecumenical discussions and experience, churches with their diverse confessions and traditions and in their various expressions as parishes, monastic communities, religious orders, etc., have learned to recognize each other as participants in the one worldwide missionary movement. Thus, together, they can affirm an ecumenical perception of Christian mission expressed in the following convictions under which they covenant to work for the kingdom of God:

IV. Mission as Economic Liberation and Cultural Identity

A focusing biblical text: Luke 4: 16-21

“When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’” And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’”



Reflection Questions:

1. Describe the action and nature of God in this text
2. What are the implications of this understanding of God for the church and the world?
3. How does this understanding of God, the church and the world shape the practice of mission?

Description of Mission as Economic Liberation and Cultural Identity

This mission emphasis assumes God’s mission is directly in the world and recognizes interconnected global realities and relationships. An increasing breadth of what mission includes leads to more emphasis on identifying root causes of problems.

These emphases take the prophetic strand of Christianity seriously by comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable for the purpose of creating just structures of society in which everyone can experience the fullness of life God intends. This mission focus involves examination of how the privileged lifestyle of some is directly related to the oppression of vulnerable groups. It takes revolution seriously in questioning whether existing structures of society can be renewed in the image of liberation or whether they need to be replaced.

God's action is identified especially among people in situations of political and economic oppression who live in the peripheries of society. Also in this emphasis, racial and ethnic identity are recognized as interconnected with such oppression and thus identity is integral to liberation. Key terms such as justice, liberation, solidarity, accompaniment, indigenization, inculturation, contextualization, and local theologies become important.

Illustrating Hymns

“Through All the World,
a Hungry Christ”
“Let Justice Flow
Like Streams”



Ecumenical Meetings That Articulate Mission as Economic Liberation and Cultural Identity:

Reflection Guides:

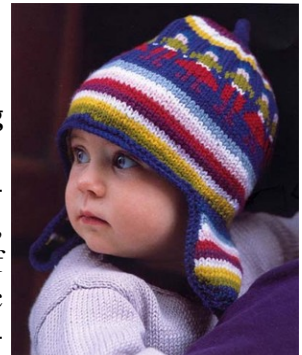
1. Outline world events during the 1970s – 80s.
2. Identify the role of the Church in mission in these excerpts
3. Describe the purpose of mission presented in these excerpts.
4. Discuss the positive and negative aspects of this emphasis of mission.

The 1980 Melbourne meeting of the Council for World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches used the phrase, “God’s preferential option for the poor.” This echoed the Puebla Conference of Latin American Catholic Bishops the previous year in 1979. The phrase refers to the identification of Jesus with the poor, divine judgment on oppressors, and solidarity with the poor and oppressed as a central priority in Christian mission.

A. Your Kingdom Come: Mission Perspectives, Report on the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism, Melbourne, Australia, 12-25 May, 1980

Section I: Good News to the Poor “The Poor and the Rich and the Coming of the Kingdom”

“The Kingdom of God which was inaugurated in Jesus Christ brings justice, love, peace and joy, and freedom from the grasp of principalities and powers, those demonic forces which place human lives and institutions in bondage and infiltrate their very textures. God’s judgment is revealed as an overturning of the values and structures of this world. In the perspective of the kingdom, God has a preference for the poor.”



#4. The coming of the kingdom as hope for the poor is thus a time of judgment for the rich. In the light of this judgment and this hope, all human beings are shown to be less than human. The very identification of people as either rich or poor is now seen to be a symptom of this dehumanization. The poor who are sinned against are rendered less human by being deprived. The rich are rendered less human by the sinful act of depriving others.

The judgment of God thus comes as a verdict in favour of the poor. This verdict enables the poor to struggle to overthrow the powers that bind them, which then releases the rich from the necessity to dominate. Once this has happened, it is possible for both the humbled rich and the poor to become humanly capable of response to the challenge of the kingdom.