

## BIG MISSION FOR SMALL CHURCHES

Most of the congregations that God is using today to turn the world upside-down, particularly in the majority world where the church is growing the fastest, are small churches.

Regardless of their size, congregations are called into being in order to be agents of God's mission in the world. Mission is not a program of the church; it is the purpose of the church. It is not the church's mission; it is God's mission into which we all are invited.

The critical question for a congregation, therefore, is not how big a church it is. The critical question is whether or not a congregation believes that it primarily exists for the sake of others, to be an agent of God's mission.

The church in every place is on the mission field, even in your city or town.

Small churches can help their members to identify their gifts and to discern how God is calling them to participate in God's mission.

Because Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom in both word and deed, we can celebrate that God gives a variety of gifts to Christians and calls them to ministries of evangelism, compassion and justice. These are expressions of the one Gospel. We are called to proclaim the Gospel and to exhibit the Kingdom of God to the world.

Because Jesus set before the disciples a global vision for God's mission, we can rejoice that some members have a passion for local mission and others for global mission. It isn't a competition.

The task of missional discernment is one of discovering how a congregations gifts, passion and personality intersect with what God is doing in the world.

Opportunities for witnessing to Jesus in word and deed close to home are often more evident, but small churches can actively participate in global mission as well.

- Participate in international mission trips, combining with other small congregations, joining with larger congregations, or sharing in trips through a presbytery partnership.
- Give in support of and pray regularly for a particular Presbyterian missionary. Even without making a financial commitment, you can choose a missionary to regularly include in your prayers. Put their name in your worship bulletin and mission letters in your newsletter. PCUSA missionary letters are at:  
<http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/profiles/missionaries.htm>
- The Antioch Partners is a new mission-sending ministry in which missionaries work to raise their own support from a network of churches and individuals. Join with other wee kirks to help support a long-term, cross-cultural missionary; [www.theantiochpartners.org](http://www.theantiochpartners.org).
- Welcome global visitors into your church through presbytery partnerships and PCUSA programs like "Mission to the US" and "Global Peacemakers."

- Participate in Christmas International House, providing holiday hospitality to international students from schools in or near your community: <http://christmasih.org>
- Share financial resources with a specific partner or project. It doesn't take much to make a big difference in support of a global mission project. Set a specific goal for a concrete project that can be reached using budgeted funds, special gifts and/or fundraisers.

One small congregation has a monthly mission brunch and receives special gifts that are designated for different mission causes through the year. This way, they add about \$100/month to their budgeted mission support.

- If members are going overseas, ask them to take time to visit with PCUSA missionaries or global partners in the countries where they will be travelling.
- Become a part of forging long-term mission relationships that allow you to discern how to build the capacity of partners for their mission and to discover the gifts that partners have to share with you.
- Send folks from your church to mission conferences such as:  
 New Wilmington Missionary Conference -- <http://nwmcmision.org>  
 Presbyterian Global Fellowship -- <http://www.pgfconference.org/pgfconference>  
 They will come back energized and with new ideas and resources!

*You can designate funds for specific PC(USA) mission projects through the denomination's Extra Commitment Opportunity (ECO) program. An ECO book is printed each year, containing hundreds of worthwhile mission projects in the U.S. and around the world. The ECO catalog is available through Presbyterian Distribution Service (800-524-2612).*

*And modest-sized mission projects are also available through The Outreach Foundation.  
 For example:*

**\$100** will provide a set of New Bible Commentaries for a pastor in Vietnam  
**\$200** will purchase a bicycle for an evangelist in Africa  
**\$1** per day will support an orphan in Uganda  
**\$300** will support a Bible school students or seminarian in China for one year  
**\$600** will build a "Prayer Shed," a humble meeting place for a new church in Bihar, India  
**\$7000** will build a church for 200 believers in East Africa  
 Every **dollar** given for missionary support helps to keep dedicated servants in the field!

For help in discerning how your church can connect with God's mission in big ways, please contact:

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