

HARVEST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH'S PHILOSOPHY OF MISSIONS

¹³ For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." ¹⁴ But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" ¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" ¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. **-Romans 10:13-17**

HPC's Vision for Missions Ministry

To remain faithful to the Great Commission, by investing in those ministries that minister with what God has instituted and promised to bless for the salvation of his elect (i.e. the faithful preaching of the Gospel, administration of the sacraments, flock shepherding and oversight, and diaconal care).

The Purpose of Missions Team (MT)

The MT is tasked with assisting the fulfillment of HPC's vision for missions. The divine mandate of our Lord Jesus Christ to go into all the world, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Triune name, and teaching them to observe everything he has commanded, as taught in Matthew 28:18-20, provides the basis from, and the impetus for, which the MT, under the direction of the Session, goes about its ministry. In her effort to be true to the Word of God, the Reformed Faith, and obedient to the Great Commission, Harvest Presbyterian Church (HPC) created the MT to help further the spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world.ⁱ Since the good news of Jesus Christ's living, dying, and rising for sinners is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes,ⁱⁱ the MT purposes to further the propagation of the gospel of Jesus Christⁱⁱⁱ in order that God may continue to save and sanctify a people for himself from every tribe and language, and people, and nation (Rev. 5:8-10).^{iv}

Missions and the Local Church

Because the primary vehicle through which God gathers, saves, strengthens, and sanctifies his elect is the local church through her corporate worship, gospel ministry, shepherding and diaconal care (WCF 25.3),^v the MT's goal is to support the establishment of confessionally Reformed or Presbyterian^{vi} healthy God-glorifying churches. In this way, the MT is following the example of the Apostles who, as recorded in Acts, established local churches under the oversight of ordained officers.^{vii} These local churches and ministers, like the Apostles before them,^{viii} are to call people to repentance and faith, administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, preserve the purity of the church, demonstrate mercy to the body and the world, and equip members to do likewise.

Word and Deed Ministry

In demonstrating mercy and equipping members to do likewise, The MT will first seek to support word and deed ministry as coordinated by the elders and deacons of a local church of like faith and practice to that of HPC. Where no such local church exists, The MT may choose to support a word and deed ministry that demonstrates a strong affinity for the local church and/or a desire to see its ministry eventually coordinated by the elders and deacons of a faithful local church. Just as the apostles ministered to believers physical and spiritual needs, so too the body of Christ, both gathered as an assembly of believers and scattered throughout the world, ought to do likewise. In doing so, it is truly the salt of the earth and light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16).

Missions Team Meetings

The MT shall meet on at least a bimonthly basis and has the following responsibilities:

- 1) Manage the Missions Ministry in accordance with HPC's Philosophy of Missions
- 2) Select missionaries and oversee missionary support
- 3) Manage and make recommendations for annual missions budget
- 4) Maintain communication with, and remain in prayer for HPC missionaries
- 5) Foster ongoing communication with Session, the HPC body, and solicit participation from HPC members
- 6) Help facilitate short term mission opportunities for HPC members

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Conclusion

In affirmation of the Biblical and confessional truths set forth above, The MT, in a prayerful and principled manner, will support missionary works that affirm the centrality of the local church in calling the elect to faith and faithfulness. Our ultimate desire is that of the Apostle Paul: to see the members of Christ's church knit together, holding fast to their Head Jesus Christ, and growing with a growth that is from God (Col. 3:19). To that end, our prayer is that God would use the labors and of the MT and the ministry of HPC to further his Kingdom, equip his elect, edify the body of Christ, and enable our neighbors throughout the world to know the love of God in Christ Jesus!

ⁱ Matthew 28:18-20 "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"

ⁱⁱ Romans 1:16-17 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, 'The righteous shall live by faith.'"

ⁱⁱⁱ 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 "Now I would remind you brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you – unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures."

^{iv} Mission to the World (MTW) affirms this vision on their website (http://mtw.org/Pages/MTW_HeartOf.aspx). Their purpose is summarized as advancing the body of Christ through church planting, they affirm partnering with Reformed and covenantal groups or denominations first and where available, and they define word and deed ministry as meeting needs within the context of local church planting.

^v It is vitally important to note the emphasis our church and confession place on the local church and the means of grace ministry therein in God's plan of salvation. Summarizing the teaching of Scripture, our church's Confession of Faith states that "unto this catholic visible Church Christ has given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world: and does, by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, make them effectual thereunto" (WCF 25.3). Christ's ministry (the offices for which ordination is required), his oracles (the Bible, its preservation, dissemination, and interpretation), and his ordinances (the means of grace consisting of the reading and preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, and corporate worship and prayer) have been exclusively given to the visible church (Eph. 4:11-13), which is the uniquely authorized institution to gather and perfect the saints.

^{vi} Reformed and Presbyterian Churches receiving support are those who minister according to summary of the Bible's faith and practice as outlined in the *Westminster Standards* or *Three Forms of Unity*.

^{vii} PCA Book of Church Order Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

^{viii} Acts 14:21-23 "When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed." See also Titus 1:5; I Timothy 3:1, 8, 13; I Timothy 5:17.