

Mission Reorientation Proposal

Missional Statement

In February of this year, the Presbytery Council presented a report on the Missional Church initiative, asking the Presbytery to provisionally adopt a proposed missional statement and send that statement to all of the congregations for comment, elaboration, and suggested changes:

The original statement read as follows:

We affirm that God's mission is our mission: the salvation of humankind and the reconciliation of the world in Jesus Christ. The congregation's role in this work is to reach seekers, nurture disciples, and send apostles of our Lord into the world. The presbytery is called to build sustainable congregations that reach seekers, nurture disciples, and send apostles and to prepare leadership for this work.

In March, all of the Sessions were sent a copy of the statement with a response form. Throughout the spring, many of our congregations discussed this statement and over 40 responded with comments and suggestions. The vast majority were encouraging of this proposal. In June, a work group of the Council reviewed the comments and made several suggested revisions to the statement.

In July, the Council further reviewed the proposal and after extended discussion, voted to revise the initial statement as follows:

Grace Presbytery claims God's mission as our calling: to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ who saves, redeems, and reconciles the world to God through ministries of witness, justice and mercy. Grace Presbytery prepares and supports leaders to build vital congregations that reach seekers and those in need, nurture disciples, and send apostles of our Lord into the world.

The Council brings the following recommendation for action: ***That Grace Presbytery:***

(1) adopt the proposed missional statement,

(2) instruct the Council, Standing Committees of the presbytery and their sub-committees and work groups to focus their work (programs, services, resources, budgets and volunteer and staff energy) in light of this statement, and through the Council to report annually the activity in implementing this missional statement along with any next step recommendations for the Presbytery to take, and

(3) communicate with each Session, inviting it to adopt the missional statement as one primary direction for its work [e.g., ____ Church claims God's mission as our calling: to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ who saves, redeems, and reconciles the world to God through ministries of justice and mercy. ____ Church seeks to build a vital congregation that reaches seekers and those in need, nurtures disciples, and sends apostles of our Lord into the world].

46 **From the original report to Presbytery (February, 2004):**

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48 ***What is this “Missional Church”?***

49 *Simply stated, a missional church is one that cares more about God’s mission in this world than*
50 ***anything else.*** *Because all of us care about God’s mission, any one of our churches can be a “missional*
51 *church”. Because all of us can be trapped by institutional maintenance, any one of our churches can*
52 *benefit from the reminder that God’s mission is more important than a particular form of institutional*
53 *life...*

54
55 *Among the things people say about a missionally-oriented church:*

- 56 • *Focuses on the centrality of worship as the primary place we hear the Good News of Christ*
- 57 • *Frames what it says and does in terms of Scripture and prayer*
- 58 • *Helps people see and celebrate God’s everyday presence in their lives*
- 59 • *Finds ways to reach people who are seeking faith and community*
- 60 • *Invites each “member” to be a growing disciple on the journey of faith*
- 61 • *Supports Christ’s ambassadors (apostles) in their daily living as they try to make a difference in*
62 *the world.*

63
64 *As “mission-minded” as each of us may already be, there are probably some ways we are holding on to*
65 *certain institutional ways of being the church and not recognizing God’s invitation to DO SOMETHING*
66 ***BETTER IN OUR PERSONAL LIVES AND IN OUR CHURCHES.*** *The “missional church” initiative is*
67 *nothing less than an invitation to **change** some of our ways.*

68
69 ***The 2004 Council’s Commitment***

70 *On January 13-14, 2004, Grace Presbytery’s Council spent 24 hours in a retreat and first meeting of the*
71 *year. During the retreat, the Council studied Scripture, prayed for our churches and discussed two*
72 *reports that “take the next steps” in the Council’s attempt to become more missionally focused in its*
73 *work.*

74
75 *This year’s Council has made three commitments:*

- 76 - *(1) to spend a substantial amount of time at each meeting in Bible Study, extended*
77 *conversation and prayer specifically for each of our churches in Grace Presbytery*
- 78 - *(2) to find ways to spend substantially less time in its meetings to complete the business that*
79 *traditionally is expected of it*
- 80 - *(3) to offer more opportunities to introduce the “missional church” to our congregations and*
81 *leaders*

82
83 *...We know of no other way into God’s future than to start making changes in our lives. It begins with*
84 *each one of us – as a disciple of Christ and a participant in a congregation of Christ’s body. It asks us to*
85 *be open to stepping out in a new direction when we’ve become comfortable walking in an old one. It asks*
86 *us to experience discomfort and to trust that God will not abandon our efforts.*

87
88 *This is a time of listening and discernment. It’s a time to plant seeds among one another, to cast the*
89 *vision that is dear to our hearts and to take action (beginning with ourselves) that leads to change for the*
90 *growth of God’s mission of salvation and reconciliation of the world in Jesus Christ.*