

MTW POLICY MANUAL
1979, p. 241, Appendix H

NOTE: Originally presented to the 4th General Assembly, 1976, p. 158, Appendix G.

1. INTRODUCING MISSION TO THE WORLD

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1. INTRODUCING MISSION TO THE WORLD

1.01 BASIS OF MISSION TO THE WORLD POLICY

The Committee on Mission to the World (MTW Committee)* is a committee of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)*. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America has established this Committee as one of its permanent committees. Membership on the Committee is through election by the General Assembly, which itself has received nominations from the constituent presbyteries.

The relationship of the Committee to the presbyteries and sessions of the denomination is defined by the duties assigned to the Committee by the General Assembly. Its role is to serve and offer coordinating facilities to these church courts. It seeks to aid these courts in the search for candidates for mission service overseas, in processing candidates, maintaining essential services for, and communication with, missionaries on the field, and in keeping the home church aware of and supportive of the ministries of such missionaries.

Its broad task is, then, to provide leadership and consultation to the Church in developing a missionary program, seeking to develop and strengthen the missionary spirit across the denomination.

The doctrinal position of Mission to the World (MTW)* is that of the Presbyterian Church in America, of which it is a committee. This position begins with affirmation of confidence in the Scriptures as the infallible written Word of God. The teachings of the Scriptures are set forth in the constitution of the PCA, in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

Based upon the absolute authority of the Scriptures, distinctive features of the system of doctrine set forth in the Confession of Faith (a system known as Calvinism) include: the

* Editor's Note: For ease in reading and space constraints, the following abbreviations and shortened forms will be used:

- 1. MTW = Mission to the World
- 2. MTW Committee = Committee on Mission to the World
- 3. PCA = Presbyterian Church in America

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sovereignty of God, focused in His sovereignty in salvation; the covenant relation between God and His chosen people; and the compatibility (though still a mystery) between God's sovereign will and man's responsibility, both in salvation and in the life of obedience on the part of those who are saved.

Obedience to the Great Commission involves missions as an essential task of the visible church; namely, proclaiming the gospel and making disciples at home and around the world, to the glory of God, as the church is commissioned to do in such passages as Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8. Further motivating factors, in addition to desire for the glory of God and obedience to our Lord's commission, are an awareness of the redemptive love and purpose of God and Christlike compassion for lost sinners.

Since a primary goal of the Great Commission is to make disciples, MTW is committed to working toward a growing church in every field of missions as God in His sovereign grace gives the increase. While MTW is concerned for both quantitative and qualitative growth, the church in and of itself cannot accomplish either. Disciple-making is wholly dependent upon the sovereign grace of God. Yet the Lord of the harvest, who prepares the harvest and thrusts forth the laborers, has stated specifically that He came to seek and to save the lost. He is pleased to call redeemed men to use His appointed means of grace and thus to share in bringing others to saving faith and to edify the body of the redeemed.

As the MTW Committee approaches the task of providing leadership and coordination to the denomination's obedience to the Great Commission, it is also committed to the kind of flexibility of working field patterns demanded by the various fields of service. Maintaining the unchanging characters of the Scriptures and the gospel, and adhering without wavering to the Reformed faith as expressed in the denomination's constitution, MTW seeks to be open to better application of traditional methods and to such innovative methods as are in accord with scriptural principles.

Another area of this flexible approach is to provide strategic financial help to projects which may have crucial impact upon world evangelization. The MTW Committee will utilize such opportunities in limited areas where it is judged that world evangelization and/or the Reformed faith would be significantly enhanced. The MTW Committee will have the authority, after prayerful consideration and review, to approve participation in such opportunities, although they may not be generated by organizations that adhere to the Reformed faith.

Flexibility is evidenced in the two-pronged approach of relating missionaries to fields of service. The primary purpose of MTW is to plant the church of Jesus Christ in those countries where particular need and our ability to meet that need most closely coincide.

The primary thrust will be in the familiar denominational pattern of developing a mission work in particular countries that is completely Presbyterian and Reformed in character, with all the missionaries on such fields being missionaries of the PCA, though some may be serving on a cooperative basis as having come from sister churches in the Reformed family of denominations.

Such cooperative possibilities serve to focus attention upon the secondary thrust of MTW in relating missionaries to fields. The General Assembly has approved the establishment of working relationships with other evangelical missionary agencies that welcome the services and teaching of missionaries holding the Reformed faith and polity. We are thus enabled to send candidates through them, as it may seem best for the greatest effectiveness in proclaiming the

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gospel. These missionaries work under their auspices while at the same time maintaining full relationship to the PCA.

It is understood that the primary thrust will emphasize the planting and strengthening of Presbyterian and Reformed churches. The secondary thrust may also produce Presbyterian and Reformed churches. Such would be the case where cooperation was with other Reformed mission agencies or denominations. It could also be the case when broadly evangelical mission agencies open areas of service where Reformed churches would be the pattern of church development. Often, however, cooperation with broadly evangelical agencies would not center upon church-planting ministries by PCA personnel. They would be engaged in support ministries and specialized tasks.

In every case of cooperation, however, agreements developed as a basis of field work together with PCA missionaries on a full membership or a loan basis, would be governed by the principle set forth in the following statement:

With full appreciation of the effective work of evangelical missionary enterprises, we of the Presbyterian Church in America are committed to a distinctive theology. Therefore, when we enter into working relationships with other agencies, written agreements must safeguard that PCA missionaries under the joint program be assured of their liberty in the full and free presentation and practice of the whole counsel of God as contained and understood according to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechism. In all other matters, the missionaries on the fields shall be subject to the rules of the agencies under which they serve. Final discipline as relates to theology and morals rests in the proper court of the Presbyterian Church in America.

It is the duty of every Christian to bear witness to the truth according to the gifts that have been given him (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 12:16-18). There are in mission work fields of labor such as education, medicine, translation, administration, evangelism, and others, where persons who are not ordained can be of great service in accordance with biblical guidelines (Acts 18:18, 24-28; I Timothy 2:12). MTW seeks to channel to appropriate places of service candidates with such gifts who are commended to us by sessions and presbyteries.

1.02 MISSION TO THE WORLD ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The membership of the Committee is composed of twelve elders, six teaching and six ruling. They are elected by the General Assembly in four classes, each class serving four years and consisting of two teaching elders and one ruling elder or one teaching elder and two ruling elders.

Administrative lines of responsibility may be visualized by the following organizational chart:

General Assembly

Committee on Mission to the World

Coordinator

Administrative Staff

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The Committee itself chooses a chairman, a vice-chairman, a secretary, and a treasurer. Each committee member is appointed to an administrative subcommittee and to a field interest subcommittee.

Meetings of the Committee are set according to need. A quorum of seven members has been established. Alternate members, elected by the General Assembly, may serve to constitute a quorum, in which case they serve as voting members (otherwise they participate in discussion but do not vote).

Administrative staff positions, job descriptions and actual employment are determined by the Committee, in consultation with the Coordinator. The Coordinator and administrative staff are responsible for employment and management of office staff.

1.03 FIELDS OF SERVICE

MTW's two-pronged thrust regarding missions leads to two types of mission field designations: Primary and Cooperative.

1.03.1 Primary Fields of Service. Primary fields of service are countries in which a specific PCA work is being conducted, with missionaries sent and coordinated by the Committee. The present fields are:

Australia	Korea
Chile	Mexico
Ecuador	Peru
France	Portugal
India	Taiwan
Japan	Venezuela
Kenya	

New primary fields may be entered after the Committee undertakes careful study of the needs and opportunities in specific countries.

1.03.2 Cooperative Fields of Service. Cooperative fields of service are countries in which missionaries from the PCA are serving directly in cooperation with and coordinated by another missions agency. The present fields are:

Argentina	Haiti	North Africa
Austria	Hong Kong	Papua New Guinea
Bangladesh	India	Peru
Belgium	Indonesia	Philippines
Brazil	Ivory Coast	Seychelles Islands
Chile	Jamaica	Sudan
Colombia	Japan	Taiwan
East Malaysia	Jordan	Truk (Micronesian Islands)
Ecuador	Kenya	Uganda
England	Korea	Venezuela
France	Liberia	West Germany
Ghana	Mexico	Zaire
Guatemala	Nigeria	

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Additional countries may be entered on a cooperative basis as candidates from the denomination go to specific countries through a cooperating missions agency.

2. REFORMED THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE OF MISSIONS

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2. REFORMED THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE OF MISSIONS

The two main divisions of this section are: "Toward a Reformed Theology of Missions" and "Toward a Reformed Practice of Missions." The word "toward" is important. We recognize the tentative nature of what is written here. This is not a final statement. It cannot be, since our denomination and MTW are both in their infancy, but more importantly, because our theological heritage demands that we maintain our life as a Reformed and reforming church. We desire to be more and more shaped in our theology and practice by the Lord of the church, who is also the Lord of the harvest, through His Word. We pray that increasingly our belief and our action will reflect adequately, if not perfectly, that source of life. We recognize that the

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work of missions is the work of the whole church. We will listen to our church as it speaks in its various ways and we will obey as it speaks through its highest court. It is our earnest desire that in this way the PCA will move toward a more biblical theology and practice of missions.

The order of the division is important. The first part of the section deals with theology and the second with practice. Theology must always judge practice. It can never be reversed. When practice judges or manipulates theology, it means the death not only of theology but also of missions. Theology cannot live under the domination of practice, but practice can and must live under the domination of theology. We commit ourselves to be a theological mission. We reject pragmatism as a guide for our action. We deplore a superficiality which seeks biblical grounds for positions already taken for other reasons. We recognize, however, that in missions we must operate as elsewhere: gaining insight biblically and finding our way. Often this insight is not prior to experience but is given in and after experience. This means that we will not have all the answers to the theological questions before we move in practice. We have the directions, but our findings and expression will often be tentative, judged continually by an increasing understanding of God's Word in the concrete situations in which God places us.

2.01 TOWARD A REFORMED THEOLOGY OF MISSIONS

2.01.1 Biblical Models of Missions. Two controlling facts guide our search for a biblical theology and practice of missions. First, the entire Bible concerns itself with missions. It is not a matter of finding an occasional missionary text but of understanding the covenant purpose of God expressed in His Word from Genesis through Revelation, and the work of God in bringing to Himself those whom He chose in Christ before the foundation of the world and forming them into a people for His possession whom He commissions to proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. (See Ephesians 1:3-14; I Peter 2:9-10.) Secondly, the Bible does not give us a missions manual as such. It gives us the material from which we must draw our missions theology, on which we must build our missions practice, but we must work diligently and openly with all the Scripture, seeking to do justice to the whole will of God and not bending or ignoring any word in the interest of a theory.

The biblical data for missions which are presented here are some of the guides which have inspired and directed the church in its mission to the world.

2.01.1(1) Old Testament

God who created man in His own image for fellowship with Himself and for dominion over His creation did not abandon His creature to the consequences of his sin when man fell. Rather, in the words of the Shorter Catechism, "God, having out of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin by a Redeemer." (Q.20)

The covenant promise of a Redeemer is found in Genesis 3:15 as it was given to our first parents. The covenant of grace comes to fuller expression in God's declarations to Abraham, for example, assuring him, "I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you" (Genesis 17:7), but assuring him also, "And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). The election of Abraham had the nations in view. Through Abraham, his family, and then Israel, God made His love and power known before the nations with a view to reaching the nations. Israel was called by God to be a preacher and example for the nations. The specific form of Israel's missionary activity was primarily to attract and draw the attention of the nations to the God of Israel, but there was also the outward going to the nations, as implied in such passages as Isaiah 49:6 and stated in the book of Jonah.

"I will also make you a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6). Israel was called out from the nations to be a witness to the nations; we are sent into the nations to witness to the nations. God's people of all times and places join in the prayer of the Psalmist: "God be gracious to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us, that Thy way may be known on the earth, Thy salvation among all nations" (Psalm 67:1-2).

2.01.1(2) New Testament

Christ - His life

Twice Matthew gives a description of Jesus' ministry: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people" (Matthew 4:23 and 9:35). Luke summarizes Jesus' ministry as doing and teaching, and implies that this pattern will be continued by the risen Christ and His church. (Acts 1:1, "All that Jesus began to do and teach.") Following the compassionate Christ today means involvement in the very same pattern. We must both proclaim and demonstrate the salvation of God. As J. H. Bavinck said, "The church is not only God's mouth but also His heart."¹

His Preaching

The proclamation of the kingdom of God forms the heart of the evangelistic ministry of Jesus: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). He says: "I must evangelize about the kingdom of God in other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose" (Luke 4:43). Jesus Himself is the most important and central element of the kingdom: "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). The kingdom's deepest nature is spiritual: "Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:37). The new spiritual life, however, will make itself felt in all spheres of a person's life (Matthew 5:13-16).

His Death

Jesus said of Himself, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). He said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:14-16). Jesus said again, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." And the Apostle John adds the explanatory comment, "But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die" (John 12:32-33). In His Good Shepherd discourse Jesus also said, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep...And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock with one shepherd" (John 10:11, 16).

His death on the cross as a substitutionary atonement for the sins of His people coupled with His resurrection provides the basis, the message, and the motivation for missionary outreach in search of the "other sheep." In a sermon on John 10:17-18, entitled "The Sacrifice of Christ, the Type and Model of Missionary Effort," James Henley Thornwell said that the supreme reverence for the glory of God which prompted Jesus to regard not His life dear unto Himself must be the dominant principle of action in missions. He said, moreover, "As Jesus by His sacrifice purchased redemption, we by ours must make it known..."

¹ Quoted by Paul Schrotenboer in "Toward Catholicity in Missions," *International Reformed Bulletin*, Winter/Spring 1974, p. 49.

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His Resurrection and Ascension

Between His resurrection and His ascension--and linked to both--Jesus gave the "Great Commission" (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:45-49; John 20:21). As Matthew 6:9-13 was given as a model for prayer, so Matthew 28:19-20 has been given as the model for missions.

Jesus begins the Great Commission with the statement: "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me." Missions then is the summons of the Lordship of Christ. It is carried on in the name of, and under the control of, the One who has all authority in heaven and on earth. It cannot be done hesitantly, fearfully or despairingly. It is triumphant work because it is the King's work.

Jesus then charges his disciples: "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." There is now a great thrust outward to all nations. This is anticipated and to some extent begun in the Old Testament; it is indicated and prepared by earlier statements of Jesus (Matthew 13:38, 22:1-14; 24:14, etc.). Going, they are to make disciples, baptizing and teaching them. We must witness, preach and live to make disciples; we must incorporate them into the body of Christ, the church, as responsible, functioning members; we must teach them all Christ's instructions, all His Word, with its implications for life in our world.

Jesus then concludes with the promise: "And, lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." The disciples' mission is supported by both His authority and His presence. He charges them to mission, but He does not delegate it to them. He continues all He began to do and teach. He continues it through them--through us. He has not turned over His work to us. He has called us to His work, and His presence is His great gift to us. Therefore, "We are not standing in the world bearing witness to Christ, but we are standing in Christ bearing witness to the world."²

Pentecost

The unique way in which the risen Christ carries on His work through His body, the church, was instituted and demonstrated at Pentecost. It is solely by the authority of the Holy Spirit that the disciples were in a position to be witnesses of Christ to the uttermost parts of the earth, Acts 1:6-8 (cf. Luke 24:47 and John 20:21). The church's work of mission is bound both to the Resurrection and to Pentecost. The Resurrection message can be brought to the nations only by the reality of Pentecost.

Acts

The whole structure of the Acts of the Apostles is determined by the course of the gospel through the world. The pattern is given in Acts 1:8, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." The book of Acts then traces the outworking of the pattern through the witness of the early Christians, guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit, with the repeated direct intervention of God (a characteristic of the book of Acts) to keep missions thrust outward and onward. The account runs from the preaching of the gospel in Jerusalem to preaching in Samaria to the connecting links of the baptism of the Ethiopian, Peter's being sent to Cornelius, the preaching of the Jewish Christians from Cyprus and Cyrene to the Greeks, to the church at Antioch separating Barnabas and Paul and sending them out, the actual beginning of missionary work among the nations--"to the end of the earth." Acts then

² Attributed to A.J. Gordon.

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traces the ministry primarily of Paul and his companions in the spread of the Gospel in Asia and Europe.

Epistles

Numerous models for missions could be presented from New Testament epistles. In fact, Paul's epistles were missionary epistles. Not only is missions an essential part of the life of the church, but it also feeds the church. By giving, it receives. We will note here only one passage from the epistles, Romans 9:11. The great doctrines of sovereign grace--the truth that God saves men--are foundational in any biblical theology of missions. Neglect of this truth which is found in Paul and summarized in our Confessional Standards cripples missions and reduces it to a human enterprise, seeking the help of God. Missions is a divine enterprise in which God commands, empowers, and uses the obedience of His servants.

The position of Paul in Romans 9:11 is that, apart from the transforming power of God's call of grace, all men are dead in sin and resistant to Him. Paul quotes Isaiah's words of God concerning the Gentiles: "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me" (Romans 10:20). It was not because of their responsiveness that God found them; because God found them, they were responsive. From among the rejecting Gentiles as well as among the rejecting Israelites, God has chosen His people. Far from discouraging missions, this truth is the only real ground for missions, and the guarantee of the success of missions.

We have looked at some of the material out of which we must create our theology of missions. What we do with these biblical data and with other related parts of God's Word will determine what we do in missions. The triune God who has sent the prophets, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the apostles also sends the church. He sends us, and our task is to do the will of Him who sends us.

2.01.2 Priority and Urgency of Planting and Strengthening Presbyterian Churches Overseas

2.01.2(1) Priority and Urgency of Planting and Strengthening Churches

The church is both the agent and the goal of missions. From the beginning Jesus Christ did not envisage individual followers and witnesses creating additional followers, but a church united by Him both to Himself and to one another, growing by enlarging and multiplying congregations.

Church growth must not be defined too narrowly. Biblical church growth includes at least three dimensions. The church grows by evangelistic proclamation with the goal of multiplying Christian congregations. The great concern of the early church was to tell the good news about Jesus and the resurrection, but proclamation was not an end in itself. The biblical pattern is to form new converts into local congregations. The church grows by the building up of the saints. The church grows by the exercising of spiritual gifts. The important discussions of spiritual gifts in Romans 12, I Corinthians 12-14 and Ephesians 4 all place gifts in the context of the community life of the church. Therefore, total church growth involves numerical, spiritual, and functional or organic growth.

Foreign missions is necessarily concerned with the establishing of the whole ministry of the church. This includes instruction and service as well as evangelization--church strengthening as well as church planting. Neither evangelization nor "perfecting" can become ends in themselves. They must continually lead to each other.

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If the chief work of missions is "the planting, propagating and perfecting of congregations," church planting and strengthening must remain the priority of our mission to the world.

2.01.2(2) Priority and Urgency of Planting and Strengthening Presbyterian Churches.

It is no accident that we are Presbyterians. We acknowledge that we have much in common with evangelicals in every church but we remember that we also have certain important distinctives. We hold our Reformed doctrine and Presbyterian polity as valued treasures because we believe they are biblical. We hold them gratefully and humbly, recognizing that they are gifts of God and not of our "works." At our first General Assembly we affirmed this basic conviction in our "Address to All the Churches." As a Church, we consciously seek to return to the historic Presbyterian view of Church government. We reaffirm in the words of that earlier "Address to All Churches" the following:

"The only thing that will be at all peculiar to us is the manner in which we shall attempt to discharge our duty. In almost every department of labor, except the pastoral care of congregations, it has been usual for the Church to resort to societies more or less closely connected with itself, and yet logically and really distinct. It is our purpose to rely upon the regular organs of our government and executive agencies directly and immediately responsible to them. We wish to make the Church, not merely a superintendent, but an agent. We wish to develop the idea that the congregation of believers, as visibly organized is the very society or corporation which is divinely called to do the work of the Lord. We shall, therefore, endeavor to do what has never been adequately done--bring out the energies of our Presbyterian system of government. From the session to the Assembly, we shall strive to enlist all our courts, as courts, in every department of Christian effort. We are not ashamed to confess that we are intensely Presbyterian. We embrace all other denominations in the arms of Christian fellowship and love, but our own scheme of government we humbly believe to be according to the pattern shown in the Mount, and, by God's grace, we propose to put its efficiency to the test."

Therefore, the priority and urgency of planting and nurturing churches overseas and our God-given Reformed doctrine and Presbyterian polity mean that our mission to the world must, through our own efforts and in cooperation with compatible Reformed churches overseas and Reformed missions at home, be engaged primarily in the work of planting and strengthening true Presbyterian churches.

In the event that PCA missionaries are working with independent agencies in a church-planting capacity, they must be at liberty to establish churches which are thoroughly Presbyterian and Reformed in both theology and government.

2.02 TOWARD A REFORMED PRACTICE OF MISSIONS

Our practice of missions is based on our theology of missions. Theology is not a preliminary activity; it is the controlling force in all our activity. It must constantly judge, correct and reshape our missions practice. But just as missions without theology cannot be true missions, theology without missions cannot be true theology. Theology without missions is dead. Our theology must be theology in action.

The plan for a Reformed practice of missions presented here discusses the sending bodies (session and presbytery); the enabling Committee (Mission to the World); and the receiving

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bodies (the Mission to the World Field Committee) and other Reformed missions and evangelical agencies.

2.02.1 Sending Bodies. The Great Commission and related New Testament passages make it clear that every believer has been called to make disciples of all nations. This involves him in a vital witness in his own community and in an outreach to other places--either personally or through his representative, and by his prayer and support. He discharges his missionary responsibility in and through the church.

The Book of Acts sets forth the scriptural role of the church--the local church--as the sending authority and as the prayer and financial base for world evangelism. In our Presbyterian system, the proper sending bodies, therefore, are the session of the local church for laymen and the presbytery for ministers. The Book of Church Order says: "The church is responsible for carrying out the Great Commission." "The initiative for carrying out the Great Commission belongs to the church at every court level..." (Chapter 15-1).

The responsibilities of these sending bodies, in consultation with the General Assembly's Committee on Mission to the World, include recruitment, examining, training, support, commissioning, contact, and furlough.³

2.02.1(1) Recruitment. It is significant that in the sending of missionaries in Acts, the emphasis is upon the initiative of others. The congregation of Jerusalem selected and sent Barnabas to Antioch (11:22). Barnabas took Saul to Antioch (11:25-26). The Church at Antioch, in obedience to the Holy Spirit, set apart Barnabas and Saul for missionary work (13:1-4). In Chapter 15, Barnabas took Mark (15:39) and Paul chose Silas (15:40). Later, Paul wanted Timothy to go with him; the congregations in Lystra and Iconium were consulted and involved in Timothy's going out ("He was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium," 16:3.)

Sessions and presbyteries should actively seek God's wisdom in laying before persons in whom they recognize gifts a missionary call. This call, of course, will either follow or create the individual's own call to missionary service (*BCO* 17-1). The church, by its challenge and discernment, must take seriously its role to motivate those of its own number to serve God overseas.

The MTW Committee is to keep presbytery MTW committees informed of MTW fields of service with their particular missionary needs and strategies for these fields so that presbytery MTW committees and local sessions may intelligently seek out missionaries for these MTW works.

2.02.1(2) Examining. It is the responsibility of the sending body to examine each missionary candidate thoroughly in the areas of call, life and doctrine. It should seek to evaluate his gifts, and calling and fitness for the missionary task and give him counsel and guidance as he seeks God's will in missions. The session or presbytery will maintain basic oversight for his doctrine and morals and will seek ways of effectively carrying out this responsibility while the missionary is overseas.

2.02.1(3) The Call to a Particular Work. After the presbytery has called, examined and approved a man for missionary service as an ordained minister, a recommendation for

³ For a helpful, brief discussion of some of these topics see *Who Really Sends the Missionary?* by Michael C. Griffiths.

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missionary service should be sent to the MTW Committee. The MTW Committee, through its staff also may extend an official call to a particular work to the candidate following his being approved for missionary service by the Committee. On the basis of this call, the presbytery should proceed to ordain and commission the candidate.

2.02.1(4) Powers Entrusted to a Missionary. When a teaching elder is approved for missionary service, the Presbytery may entrust to him as an evangelist for a period of twelve months the power to organize churches, until there is a session in the church so organized, to instruct, examine, ordain and install ruling elders and deacons therein (*BCO* 8-6).

2.02.1(5) Powers Entrusted to a Church-Planting Team. When there are three or more teaching elders (missionaries) on the field, they will have power to constitute a provisional presbytery for the purposes of examining and receiving candidates for the Gospel ministry, and receiving organized churches into its membership. When there are two national teaching elders and two or more congregations with at least three national elders, the provisional presbytery will give way to the national presbytery and the missionaries will cease to be members thereof.

2.02.1(6) Support. It is clear that the sending churches in the Book of Acts were involved in the support--prayer and financial--of their missionaries. When a session or presbytery encourages an individual to mission service, it accepts the responsibility to back up that person by prayer and giving.

2.02.1(7) Commissioning. The commissioning of missionaries should be done by the sending body--the session or the presbytery.

2.02.1(8) Contact. Following the above procedure, the church at home will feel far more involved in the missionary's work. He came from them; he is supported by them; in a real sense his work is an extension overseas of their own local or presbytery ministry. There should be maintained a vital contact between the missionary and the sending body. The session or presbytery should arrange to receive regular reports from its missionary on the field. It should evaluate his work and seek to offer advice and encouragement. It must take seriously its basic oversight for his doctrine and morals.

2.02.1(9) Furlough. It is significant that when Paul and Barnabas returned from their first term of service in Cyprus and Galatia to the church "from which they had been commended by the grace of God for the work that they had accomplished, they gathered the church together and began to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles" (Acts 14:26, 27). "They remained no little time with the disciples" (14:28). This can form an appropriate pattern for furlough missionaries. Their main responsibility is to the church or presbytery which sent them out. The MTW staff, in cooperation with the session or presbytery, will provide the opportunity for the missionary to share with the whole denomination his work--and thus serve to enlarge the mission vision of the whole church. Itineration will be coordinated with the General Assembly's MTW Committee, through its staff.

2.02.2 Enabling Committee. The MTW Committee serves as an "enabling" committee. It was created by the General Assembly to encourage and enable the PCA at every level to function as a missionary church. The Book of Church Order, Chapter 15, defines the role of the General Assembly and its Committees. "The Assembly is responsible to encourage and promote the fulfillment of this mission (the Great Commission) by the various courts." "The work of the church as set forth in the Great Commission is one work, being implemented at the General Assembly level through equally essential committees." "It is the responsibility of the General Assembly to evaluate needs and resources, and to act out priorities for the most

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effective fulfillment of the Great Commission." "The Assembly's committees are to serve and not to direct any church judicatories. They are not to establish policy, but rather execute policy established by the General Assembly." "The committees serve the church through the duties assigned by the General Assembly." The Book of Church Order sets forth the role of the committees as that of important but limited servants of the whole church. Within this description, the MTW Committee promotes missions throughout the church, encourages the various courts of the church in their missionary responsibility, and coordinates the work of missions throughout our denomination.

The role of the MTW Committee is to serve the General Assembly and all the courts of the church, to obey fully the directives of the General Assembly, to be sensitive to its mood and style, and to maintain humbly its role as servant.

Foreign missions is not the special preserve of the MTW Committee; rather, the Committee acts representatively for the whole church, which is inherently the missionary community. It is not the Committee which sets missionary policy. The church--the whole church in its General Assembly--must take this responsibility.⁴ The Committee is an "enabling" committee. It seeks to enable the churches and the presbyteries of the PCA to fulfill their obligations to God in missions. It seeks to bring a mission vision to the whole denomination. It seeks "to encourage and promote" foreign missions in churches and presbyteries by sharing resources, ideas and personnel.

It assists churches and presbyteries in the recruitment of missionary candidates. It also recruits in a broader setting--challenging students in colleges and seminaries and those persons outside the PCA who desire to serve God in biblical missions. In some cases, persons are brought into the PCA through contact with MTW.

It examines and processes missionary candidates. In this important area, MTW works with sessions and presbyteries. The examination by these sending bodies is primary and basic. MTW examines further, especially in the areas of missiology and cross-cultural concerns (such as linguistic ability, etc.).

It works with the missionary candidate and his church or presbytery in planning for further training or experience where it is necessary. It assists churches and presbyteries in the matter of support. It does not replace the sending bodies in this responsibility but can and will assist congregations and presbyteries desiring assistance in the matter of support for their missionaries who do not have large support from their churches or presbyteries to find interested churches. It recommends fields of service and assignment of candidates. ("It is the responsibility of the General Assembly to evaluate needs and resources, and to act on priorities for the most effective fulfillment of the Great Commission" *BCO* 15-1.) In our highly complex world, with its political problems, cultural complexity and denominational confusion, it is necessary for the church to give considerable care to the matter of establishing works and ministries overseas. It is necessary that the General Assembly enter into its mission commitments in a careful, prayerful and skillful manner, not carelessly and haphazardly.

It recommends salary and benefit levels, assists the missionary in itineration (in cooperation with the session or presbytery) and helps him in the technical matters related to his going overseas.

⁴ See Acts 15 where the church through its representatives dealt with a theological issue which arose in the context of missions.

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It relates the missionary to the receiving body, assists the churches and presbyteries in evaluating his performance, and assists the missionary in maintaining contact with the sending body and the denomination. It assists the missionary and his church or presbytery in planning for the use of his furlough time.

The MTW Committee exists to enable the PCA--the whole church--to be a mission church and to enable each church and presbytery to fulfill its mission obligation. We believe that fulfillment of this mission is based on harmony, mutual trust and effective, creative cooperation between the MTW Committee and the churches and presbyteries of our denomination.

2.02.3 The Receiving Bodies and Coordinators. There are three⁵ different models for mission work which are currently being used or considered by MTW. The first two are related to "The Priority and Urgency of Planting and Strengthening Presbyterian Churches Overseas" (see 2.01.2) and the third to "The Propriety of Cooperative Work With Evangelical Mission Agencies in Service and Support Ministries" (see Chapter 2, Exhibit 3).

2.02.3(1) Mission to the World. It is of greatest importance that the PCA find Reformed churches overseas to which it can relate its mission work and create such churches through its own witness where these do not exist. There are problems and difficulties in establishing such relationships. Considerable time may be required. There must be care and caution.

In areas where there is no church with which we can work or where there is such a church but factors prevent (at least temporarily) our developed relationship, MTW will carry on directly its own work, with a view to establishing Presbyterian churches in that country and/or strengthening the Reformed witness.

The coordination in this model will be the responsibility of the MTW Committee or the MTW Field Committee in that country, as detailed in the Manual.

2.02.3(2) Reformed Missions. There are many places where we can work in closest cooperation with other distinctly Reformed denominations or mission agencies. We can thereby avoid duplication and overlapping, give visible demonstration of our unity and greatly further our major goal of planting and strengthening Presbyterian churches overseas. The cooperation in this model will be the responsibility of the field committee of the Reformed mission. Our relationship to each mission is defined in signed agreements. (See Exhibits 1 and 2 for sample copies.)

2.02.3(3) Evangelical Missions. The above two models relate specifically to the planting and strengthening of Presbyterian churches overseas. The third relates to support and service ministries and other mission endeavors in cooperation with evangelical missions and to a Reformed witness in deed and word overseas. This model is (1) secondary to the task of planting and strengthening Presbyterian church overseas, and (2) limited by the definition of the General Assembly and by MTW's policy.

Propriety of Cooperative Work With Evangelical Mission Agencies in Service and Support Ministries. There are many evangelical Christian agencies serving the Lord in a variety of ways

⁵ There are other models which may be considered, for example, the non-professional missionary. There are 2.5 million Americans overseas. For every missionary overseas from the U.S. today, it is estimated that there are 105 other Americans serving in self-supporting positions. American Christians overseas need orientation, prayer support and guidance in ministry. See "Missionaries: How to Bring Them In," by Phillip Butler in Christianity Today, July 4, 1975, p. 16.

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in world missions. Many PCA congregations and members have had long and close associations with a number of agencies. The personnel of these agencies and their support are drawn from various denominations. Although many such missionary agencies are one with the PCA in recognizing the Bible as the very Word of God and as the infallible rule of faith and practice and in adherence to many of the basic doctrines of the Word of God, some of them do not hold to those distinctives of Presbyterian and Reformed theology and polity which we hold dear because we believe they are biblical. However, such organizations with which we have working agreements do give absolute confirmation of the liberty of the PCA missionaries as stated and clarified in other places in this document.

Church planting of Presbyterian congregations usually must be done through distinctly Presbyterian and Reformed sending agencies. We believe, however, that there are areas of mission endeavor in which, with proper safeguards for the theological integrity and freedom of our PCA missionaries, MTW may work with such agencies in terms of carefully drawn cooperative agreements.

The 1974 General Assembly of the PCA adopted the following statement:

"That the General Assembly authorize the Committee on Mission to the World to establish relationships with other evangelical missionary agencies that welcome the services and teaching of missionaries holding the Reformed faith and polity, so as to enable it to send candidates to them, as it may seem best for the greatest effectiveness in proclaiming the gospel, to work under their auspices while at the same time maintaining full relationship to the PCA; also to receive and forward to the agencies concerned financial support needed by them. Such missionaries shall be responsible to the sessions or presbyteries in matters of doctrine and moral conduct, but at the same time subject to the rules of the agencies under which they serve. Such missionaries shall be considered missionaries of the PCA, and as such they will send news and reports of their work to MTW, the presbytery and supporting churches and individuals in the PCA. Details as to itineration while on furlough, pensions and other matters needing definition or adjustment would be worked out with the agencies concerned. Careful evaluation will be made at the 1975 General Assembly to be certain that our missionary efforts under the program provide full and free presentation of the gospel as contained in and understood in the Reformed view."

Agreements, which protect the interests of the General Assembly, are signed by MTW and the evangelical mission. (See Chapter 2, Exhibit 3 for sample copy.) No missionary is sent to work with another mission without this signed agreement. Each new cooperative agreement will be presented annually to the Committee of Commissioners with the doctrinal statements of each agency for review.

These additional guidelines and limitations will be followed by MTW: (1) Mission to the World ordinarily enters into discussions with evangelical mission boards only at the request of a PCA church member, minister, session, or presbytery. The initiative for such a cooperative venture must come from a church court or church member. MTW does not recruit missionaries for evangelical missions. It responds to requests from its constituency--the PCA.⁶ (2) MTW does

⁶ Note that the Book of Church Order states that "the church recognizes the right of individuals and congregations to labor through other agencies in fulfilling the Great Commission" (15-1). MTW acts in

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not participate in any way in its planning function in cooperative effort with independent mission agencies. (3) Only funds specifically so designated will be transmitted to evangelical mission agencies for missionary support or project use. (4) In keeping with our stated priority of planting and strengthening Presbyterian churches overseas, it is expected that the larger portion of our missionary force will serve in that category (the first of two models).⁷ (5) The missionary with an evangelical mission must report to his sending body and to MTW at least once a year concerning his liberty in the full and free presentation and practice of the whole counsel of God as contained and understood in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms.

The coordination in this model will be the responsibility of the field committee of the evangelical mission.

Relations to Church Councils. In dealing with such as the World Council of Churches, the MTW Committee of the PCA shall operate under the policy set forth by the Third General Assembly (C.2, p. 123, Minutes of the Third General Assembly), "that the PCA shall maintain separation from the National and World Council of Churches, and that the Committee on MTW (will) continue to interpret and apply this instruction subject to the review of the General Assembly, so that the Church may continue to further the spread of the gospel throughout the world and not surrender any mission field as long as the gospel is not compromised.

2.03 CONCLUSION

The MTW Committee commends this plan to the PCA. We believe that it represents serious and careful treatment in theology. The major applications have been tested in practice. We believe that it is in the interest both of the peace and the purity of the church. It presents a program of mission which is in the best Reformed tradition and one that all our churches can accept and support. Because of the insistence on the scriptural role of the church and presbytery as the sending bodies and because of the variety of models, the conscience of no individual church members, minister, session or presbytery is violated. This program can maintain the peace and purity of our church and it can unite us in the great work of world missions.

the spirit of the statement when it seeks to respond to and guide individuals and congregations who wish to use their right in laboring through other agencies in fulfilling the Great Commission.

⁷ As of August 1, 1975, there were 47 missionaries, either on the field or approved. Six are working with evangelical missions and seven are assigned to such missions, pending completion of the agreement between the mission involved and MTW. Seventy-two percent (72%) of our total missionary force, as of August 1, 1975, was involved in, or assigned to, work in the first three 7 models--"planting and strengthening Presbyterian churches overseas."