



Partners for the Missional Journey

Last month, many of us from San Diego attended the Presbyterian Global Fellowship Inside Out Conference in Long Beach. It was an uplifting, inspiring, encouraging event. A number of people have shared with me how much they appreciated it, and how it provided a positive boost of missional, Presbyterian energy.

Conference organizers only had 700 registrations a few weeks before the event, but over 1000 people ended up attending! Over 150 of these people came from the Presbytery of San Diego, so we were a major part of this gathering. Mike McClenahan did a great job of speaking on the opening night and emceeding throughout the weekend, and the Solana Beach Pres band did a great job leading us in worship. We were blessed with three speakers from foreign countries: Alan Hirsch from Australia, John Azuma from Ghana, and Mark Labberton from Berkeley (just kidding!). Brenda Salter McNeil gave one of the best Bible lessons I have ever heard.

The conference did a good job of helping us to hear from people of different racial, ethnic, and social backgrounds. We got to hear from the Hispanic young men of Reality changers. We got to hear a powerful African American woman's perspective in Brenda Salter McNeil. And John Azuma shared with us about growing up as a Muslim, becoming a Christian, and the duty we have to give Muslims the opportunity to hear about Jesus Christ. Today there are more Presbyterians in Ghana than there are in the United States and Scotland combined! I would love to see greater attendance of Presbyterians from different racial ethnic backgrounds, but we are being introduced to a variety of speakers that helps us see the fuller expressions of the Body of Christ in the world.

A whole series of workshops were presented to give people an opportunity to interact in smaller groups about more specific topics. There were good times to connect with friends from across the denomination and opportunities to meet new people and hear what other people are working on in their churches. One of our

people told me how encouraging it was to talk to others who were trying to figure out how to be missional. We are not the only ones!

We had a good representation from our General Assembly Council staff from Louisville. They entered into a number of conversations with people about the mission work of the GAC, and they expressed to me personally the positive developments they saw at the PGF conference.

Our original idea to affiliate with Presbyterian Global Fellowship as a presbytery came from the fact that we both share the same objective: we want to see mainline congregations transformed into missional communities. As you well know, we are facing many challenges right now that could easily distract us from that goal. But, we can't let that happen. We must deal with all of our challenges, and we will. We will put our best time and energy into everything that we do, and this presbytery will always do everything we can to serve and minister alongside of you as best we know how. But, we will not become so focused on our difficult circumstances, that we give up on our missional process. This is the key to a vital future. No one person or congregation can do this alone. We need each other. We are all on the same team. We need more partners for this missional journey, so that we can learn from others, and share what we have learned with them.

This month, we return our attention to our missional process here in San Diego. We have eight pastors that will begin the missional pastor leader survey process this month. We have four congregations that will begin the missional church readiness survey process. I am excited to see how God's Holy Spirit will move among us as we seek to learn new ways to be His people in this place.

The Presbyterian Global Fellowship is not the only bright spot in the denomination, but it is certainly one of them. I came away from the conference proud to be from the Presbytery of San Diego, and proud to be a Presbyterian. We have a lot of strong, committed, persevering Christians in our denomination who are faithfully serving Christ and wanting to learn to be missional. I want to stay connected with them.

God is at work in our world and in our denomination. Sometimes I feel like we need to run to catch up with what God is already doing. My prayer is that we will all join

together in the coming year in listening to God, listening to God's Word, and listening to one another. My prayer is that we will join together in asking

What is God doing?

What does God want to do? And

What does God want us to do?

We are Presbyterians. We live in Imperial and San Diego counties. We can do this.

Let's go!



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