

# Our Theology of Mission



**Global Ministries**

The United Methodist Church



Photo: Cynthia Mack



Photo: Mike Barbee

The Mission Theology statement guides Global Ministries' participation in the Missio Dei. It frames Global Ministries' role within the denominational mission to *make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world*. The transforming power belongs to God, and Global Ministries is in mission to witness to what God has done and is doing, and to learn from what God is doing in every land where disciples gather in the name of Jesus Christ.

## God's Mission from Creation to Completion

God's Mission reclaims the life of all creatures and redeems all creation for God's intended purpose. Holy Scriptures bear witness to mission that begins with God, belongs to God, and will be fulfilled by God at the end of time. The Spirit of God, which moved over the waters of chaos at creation, and the Word of God, which became Incarnate in Jesus Christ, leads on to fullness in God's purpose.

## The Self-Emptying Life of Jesus the Christ in Service to the Least and the Last

In response to God's Mission for him, Jesus—whom we Christians acknowledge as God's Son, the Christ, the anointed servant of God, and our savior—poured himself out in servanthood for all humanity and emptied himself of divine privilege, assuming the trials and risks of human limitation. Jesus identified in compassion with all humanity and lived in radical faithfulness to the will of God. He became obedient unto death—even a humiliating public execution. In raising Jesus from the dead, God shows willingness and power to reconcile all creation and to restore the world to its divine purpose.

## The Church as a Community of Servanthood in Mission

God's Holy Spirit calls the Church into being for mission. The Church is one sign of God's presence in the world and of God's intention for creation. In response to God's call and the leading of the Holy Spirit, women and men, young and old, of all nations, stations, and races, and in all times and places, unite as the living body of Christ to join God's mission of redemption, bearing witness to God's presence in the world. This Community of faith aspires to live out the potential of new life in Christ among all human beings now, while envisioning the fulfillment of God's reign and the completion of God's mission. The Church experiences and engages in God's mission as it pours itself out for others, ready to cross every boundary to call for true human dignity among all peoples, especially among those regarded as the least of God's children, all the while making disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world.





## Grace at Work Everywhere

In our Wesleyan tradition we acknowledge the grace of God placed in our hearts and at work in the world before any action on our part. In response we accept and proclaim grace that sets us upon the right path of obedience to the Word made flesh in Jesus Christ. This grace calls us to repentance, and to active faith and good works in Christ. Active faith participates in the perfecting and fulfilling grace of God, which claims and implements the promises of God to deliver exploited persons and oppressed peoples, to restore the sanctity and integrity of God's creation, and to reconcile division in the households of faith and among the peoples and nations of the earth as all of creation groans for redemption. The Wesleyan expectation of "perfection in love" draws redeemed individuals into appropriate, active, transforming relationships of wholeness and unity with God, all people, and creation. Repentance and faith elicit both personal salvation, and social and cosmic transformation.

## Transformative Witness

The Church in Mission lifts up the name of Jesus in thought, word, and deed, proclaiming Jesus Christ as "the Word become flesh" through its own incarnate living; deeds of love; and service, healing, and renewal. By representing the revelation of God in Christ in word and deed, the Church remains faithful both to the Great Commandment that we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves; and to the Great Commission that we make disciples of all nations. The Church as faithful community moves full of hope toward the transformation of the world and the day when God's mission is fulfilled.

## God's Prior Presence, Our Current Response

God's light shines in every corner of the earth, and God's mission extends to all creation. There are no places where God's grace has not always been present, only places where God in Christ is not recognized, served, or heeded. Because God's image is present in every human being throughout the world, mission partnership embraces witness in all cultures, traditions, political arrangements, economic structures, and languages. Partners in God's mission seek to hear God's voice, to discover the signs of the moving of the Spirit through the world today, and to bear witness to God's activity—overarching past, present, and future—in every local setting.

## The Spirit's Surprising Activity

The Spirit is always moving to sweep the Church into a new mission age. With openness and gratitude we await the leading of the Spirit in ways not yet seen as God continues to work God's purposes out in our own day in a new way.



Photo: Mike DuBose



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