

## General Presbyter Brief to Mission Council: 3/11/08

I am delighted to offer a top-level brief as an introduction to our work together. This will be expanded as we learn and work together.



### Our Logo: Together Transforming Lives, Congregations, Communities, and World

The Newark Presbytery Logo

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has over 11,000 congregations which are organized into 173 presbyteries (district governing bodies) and 16 synods (regional governing bodies). Newark Presbytery's distinct contribution to this mix of ministries is reflected in our mission design, and that design is now illustrated in our new logo.

The Presbytery of Newark (our official, legal name) shares same first three words with 172 other presbyteries!!!, "The Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_" What is our uniqueness?

The answer: the word: "**NEWARK!**" No other presbyterian body has the privilege of loving the people within our bounds like we do! Referring to our presbytery as NEWARK Presbytery puts the priority of our mission FIRST. Its not just about the presbytery itself, but the 800,000 people living within the bounds of Newark Presbytery.

Our logo puts the focus on the big red word: **Newark**. Multiple congregations and people are together represented by the multiple grey lines that are similar yet distinct reaching out of our sanctuaries and comfort zones transformed by the love of God toward the world. Our entire world reach is localized in mission right inside our bounds, illustrated by the world settling inside the "N" of Newark. Our mission is to be together transforming lives, congregations, communities, and the entire world in the name of Jesus Christ.

Newark Presbytery Goes from the Inside, Out! God loved the world so much, that he gave his one and only son... Believe; and experience abundant Life! (John 3:16, 10:10)

### We Are a Presbytery That Can Expect More (from my February report to Presbytery)

Mark 8.22-26 They arrived at Bethsaida. Some people brought a sightless man and begged Jesus to give him a healing touch. Taking him by the hand, he led him out of the village. He put spit in the man's eyes, laid hands on him, and asked, "Do you see anything?" He looked up. "I see men. They look like walking trees." So Jesus laid hands on his eyes again. The man looked hard and realized that he had recovered perfect sight, saw everything in bright, twenty-twenty focus. Jesus sent him straight home, telling him, "Don't enter the village."

I recently picked up a brochure outside a church sanctuary entitled, What to Expect During Your Visit. It was designed for the first-time visitor and previewed what a normal, regular order of worship looked like, how the service would be conducted, the pastor's theology, and a brief description of church groups. It sounded so...complete. I wondered how many people simply experienced what that brochure described should be expected. Nothing more or less.

Maybe it would be better if some disappointment **were** experienced. That is, if worshippers expected MORE from God who offered MORE, but experienced less, shouldn't they be rightly disappointed? If God offered a wondrous blessing to those present in a unique and dynamic way, would they even notice?

The story above from Mark 8 about the sightless man tells what on the surface looks like a failed miracle of Jesus, but it tells of unfulfilled expectations being finally realized. The sightless man's friends expected that Jesus would heal the blindness. Jesus took the man out of town, where otherwise-abled (disabled) people begged, to experience something other than shame and rejection. Using his own saliva as a balm, Jesus placed his hands on the man's eyes, asking him if he could see.

Yes!, the now-sighted man reported that he saw...people upside down! Seeing upside down was better than not seeing at all, right? Maybe they should leave well enough alone. Maybe they expected too much of Jesus. Maybe they should just go back to town thinking their friend was doomed to begging forever. Thankfully, they waited, they expected more. They recognized in that moment of increasing clarity that Jesus not only could, but would do much more than they at first experienced. At the Master's Second Touch, all was well, and Jesus reminded him, there is no need to go back to that village begging!

What do we expect in our congregation's worship and ministry? The Mission Council is the team within the presbytery that will lead the notion that all our congregation's can EXPECT MORE! God's transforming Spirit is urging us to go beyond incremental and incomplete blessings to receive the empowering Second Touch to be that real, new, community of Christ's disciples in the world. Newark Presbytery will seek to empower every congregation in their community and in the world in new, healthy, and effective ways. I am honored to expect more with you in 2008. This is the challenge we face as the Mission Council.

### **Welcome to the Mission Council (MC)**

The Mission Council is a unique and new team within the presbytery charged with stimulating, nurturing, and providing oversight and resources to new, transformative, and transforming ministries within our bounds. Mission Council helps every congregation ask the question: What is God up to in this community or area? How can our shared congregational energies align to this opportunity God is offering? Thank you for investing your gifts on this important team!

### **Tools of the Mission Council**

One of our Mission Council tools is to form a **Work Team**, typically understood to be more than one congregation, whose members (5-9 people) join to share a common vision and passion to offer service outward to the community together. We have developed an application process and form to complete. The Work Team can become an adaptive and creative missional response on behalf of the presbytery and executed by multiple congregations.

Another tool is **MissionInsite**. New web resources are now available online. To get started, click the Church User Registration in the lower left panel at [www.missioninsite.com](http://www.missioninsite.com). Click to register to gain access to recently updated information about your church's community. Newark Presbytery's agency account number is **BHJ77**. On the screen that follows, choose your city, select your congregation, and start discovering. Check out the on-line tutorial and training on how to actually use MissionInsite.

**Mission Council Opportunities and Responsibilities** is informed by (listed by increasing importance):

- Book of Order
- Newark Presbytery
- NP Standing Rules
- Guidance of the Spirit!

## 2008 Thematic Goals for Newark Presbytery

As General Presbyter, I listen, learn, and assess the many incredible assets of our congregations and leadership, building sites, and community needs. I support the work of the Mission Council and am available to the MC as a resource. It is important for the MC to understand the direction Newark Presbytery is moving in since the new mission design was implemented in 2006.

- A. Every congregation and pastor will commit themselves to ministry:
  1. Wellness (Health in every category. It is not just about physical indicators. Wellness speaks of proper priorities and a commitment to shalom, and the experience of vital, healthy, growing congregational life.)
  2. Effectiveness (accomplishing our God-given purpose in our congregation's ministry in the world. This is typically measurable, meaningful activity.)
- B. Achievable Propositions
  1. Elders will innovate
  2. Pastors will collaborate
  3. Youth will participate
- C. Focus on our 800,000 neighbors. The focus is not just the CHURCH, but the WORLD, our communities, that God wants us to love in Jesus' name.

### Every congregation in 2008 will take a look at:

- **Ministry Opportunities (MC)**. This is the special area of the Mission Council work. How can we stimulate, nurture, and fund opportunities. Not just carry on "church business as usual." Mission Council helps every congregation ask the question: **What is God up to in this community or area? How can our shared congregational energies align to this opportunity God is offering?**
- **Ministry Capacity (COM)** This is a special area of expertise the Committee on Ministry brings to the table of presbytery ministry. Capacity of our pastors, sessions, and congregations is of particular interest to the COM. One of the tools COM is using is the Cluster Model to help our congregations step-up and take responsibility for God's work within their geographic area. This focus will help clustered congregations know and build on each other's gifts and vision.
- **Ministry Assets (BOT)** The Board of Trustees is focused on the financial investments of the presbytery, and to help our congregations maximize and use their physical assets for God's work. One of the projects the BOT is undertaking is providing emergency assistance for building repair, and to provide a site audit and appraisal assessment of their building so that good stewardship will promote healthy and effective ministry.

Thank you for your leadership on the Mission Council. I am looking forward to working with you, together. See you next month!

Kevin

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