

**Southern Africa Mission Network  
Jeffersonville, IN  
October 15 & 16, 2004**

**Notes from the meeting:**

**Reports:**

**Sylvia Campbell, Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church, Woodlands, TX. (Submitted a written report).** Relationship with the United Church in Zambia began in 1999. Since then, 27 members of the congregation have made visits to Zambia, and 12 Zambian friends have visited Woodlands. Three partners: Justo Mwale Theological College (Reformed Church in Zambia, the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa and Central Church of Africa Presbyterian) in Lusaka, Namumu Orphanage Centre, United Church of Zambia in Siavonga.

**Rick Schmidt, Donegal Presbytery – Umtata Presbytery. (Submitted written report).** Began exploring partnership in February/March 2000. Projects are agricultural and computer. Groups have been exchanging visits to work on projects. Question: How do you get all congregations in the presbytery involved? Many congregations are involved, at least through contributing funds. Not sure if congregations are really aware of the projects that are sponsored through the Presbytery partnership.

**Tom Cook and Kevin Laporte, First Presbyterian Church Harbor Springs, MI – Elim, Lepopo, Northern Transvaal, Evangelical Presbyterian Church.** Congregational partnership. Partnership got started through a personal relationship with a person (Gabriel) from South Africa. Mission Committee undertook a project that involved congregation and community to send books to the congregation in South Africa (where?). Established a library. Elim has been asking for funds to build a cathedral type church. Communications is challenging. A partnership covenant has been established, with a desire for the partnership to grow. Education, HIV/AIDS, Church building structure are emphasis of visits. Church needs a new roof. Have not engaged the Presbytery (Makinac). **Video produced.**

**Dorothea Murray, Donegal Presbytery – Umtata Presbytery.** Exploratory visit to South Africa in 1997. Partnership established in 1998. Wanted a true partnership. Fifteen churches in Umtata, 60 in Donegal. How to make it a true partnership? Covenant agreement stated that relationship would be an important part of the partnership. Project was secondary, with the initiative taken by Umtata. Recognized land as being a great asset in Umtata. Food, employment and money for the churches are problems in Umtata. Americans have clocks, South Africans have time. Important to see each other once in awhile. Timed visits from South Africa with Presbytery meetings. Encouraging congregation to congregation relationships within the presbytery partnership. Discouraging the sending of money between congregations. Resources going to

agricultural projects. Not putting financial assistance into computer projects, but providing assistance.

**Eric Markman and Paul Brown, Northern New England – Amatola Presbytery. (Submitted written report).**

Began with a person (Gideon) from South Africa visiting congregations and speaking at Presbytery meetings. Northern New England sent a delegation for the inauguration of the Uniting Church in South Africa. Partnership was established with the Reformed Presbyterian Church in South Africa, so the relationship is stronger with that part of the Uniting Presbyterian Church. Noted the generous hospitality of South African people. Created partner congregations. South Africans sent artifacts to the U.S. for fund raisers. (It takes a lot of work on the U.S. side to make that happen). Project and exchange of peoples was also a desire for the partnership. Began with a youth exchange. Individual partnerships and presbytery –wide partnerships. Presbytery sent scholarships to South Africa. South African partners decided where to put the scholarships. Raised \$110,000.00 for the youth exchanges for two years: home stays and camp experiences. South African partners paid approx. 12% of the cost. Groups are not as well integrated as the Presbytery of Northern New England would like. In 2003, Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church was invited to be in partnership with three congregations in Amatola Presbytery. Partnership has been incredibly successful.

**Bob Schminky, New Castle Presbytery**

Moved to South Africa in 1994 to serve as mission workers. Sara is a pastor served a congregation. Worked in Guguletu, outside of Cape Town. Bob was a community organizer. Served as a liaison with the “outside world.” Partnership between Western Cape and Florida Presbytery is thriving. Rev. Spiewo- Stellenbosch University partnership is strong and very helpful, especially in terms of keeping track of finances. AIDS is an important emphasis for ministry at the Guguletu congregation led by Spiewo. Organizing a youth work camp for South African and U.S. youth (summer 2006).

***Staff Reports:***

**Janet Guyer, HIV/AIDS Regional Consultant, Southern Africa.** Swaziland has the highest HIV/AIDS infection rate in Africa, per population rate. Good news – Zambia appears to be turning rates around. Regional Consultant is: To be a presence, provide technical support – not financial support, help interpret to churches in the U.S. what is happening in Africa.

**Lionel Derenoncourt, International Hunger Program, Joining Hands Against Hunger(JHAH)** JHAH works in South Africa and Lesotho. Program establishes bridges of solidarity (networks) between congregations and NGO’s. Broader than communion to communion partnerships. Works with other denominations, councils of churches, etc. It is a relationship built on the commitments of organizations to fight hunger. Networks define key focus areas for South Africa and Lesotho. South Africa networks are provincial – AIDS, unemployment, agriculture, land distribution, poverty

and welfare are key issues. Basic income grants (BIG) is a key program in South Africa and JHAH is committed to that program. Revs. Ken Jones and Suzanne Carter and working with JHAH in South Africa.

**Carol and Don Mead, International Presbyterian Education Network (IPEN).**

Listening and learning are key objectives. Web site has been established. Short-term mission volunteer opportunities are available. Networking with Mission Networks. Heard from a South African Anglican Bishop that the greatest need in South Africa is education. Sorting out the kinds of things that Americans can do to strengthen education programs. Church-related schools in South Africa have been nationalized. Exploring the right way to improve education in South Africa. Important to take institutional contexts into account. Need to listen to the partners to learn about their priorities. IPEN is trying to identify representatives from each of the Mission Networks to serve as a liaison with IPEN. IPEN normally meets twice a year.

**Leadership Team:** Kevin Laporte (Convener), Tom Cook, Eric Markman, Rick Schmidt, Bob Schminkey.

*Closing discussion:*

**Future ideas for Network activities:** Travel Study Seminar, including representatives from PCUSA Presbyteries/Congregations with partnerships in South Africa. Theological conference with cultural exchange.