

**PEACEMAKING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
IN THE
DIRECTORY FOR WORSHIP
OF
THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

Christian worship is not divorced from concern for peacemaking and social justice. As Christians participate in the Lord's Supper, they call upon the Holy Spirit to

keep them faithful as Christ's body, representing and doing God's work in the world. (W-2.4005, g.)

Around the Table of the Lord, God's people are in communion with Christ and all who belong to Christ. Reconciliation with Christ compels reconciliation with one another. All the baptized faithful are to be welcomed to the Table, and none shall be excluded because of race, sex, age, economic status, social class, handicapping condition, difference of culture or language, or any barrier created by human injustice. Coming to the Lord's Table the faithful are actively to seek reconciliation in every instance of conflict or division between them and their neighbors.

... and they commit themselves afresh to love and serve God, one another, and their neighbors in the world.

(W-2.4006)

Offering of material goods in worship is an affirmation of "**commitment to be stewards of all creation ... and responsibility to share the Word and to care for all people.**" (W-2.5003)

Through worship Christians relate to each other and the world, expressing "**God's power to create and sustain community in the midst of a sinful world.**" They "**... respond to God's act of reconciliation by exchanging signs and words of reconciliation and of Christ's peace ...**" and as they "**...apply God's Word to daily life.**" Furthermore, they "**... commit themselves to and are commissioned for specific corporate and personal ministries of compassion, justice, peacemaking, reconciliation, and witness.**" (W-2.6001 & W-3.)

Christians offer prayers of intercession for

**the world, those in distress or special need, and all in authority, that peace and justice might prevail;
the nation, the state, local communities, and those who govern in them, that they may know and have strength to do what is right.** (W-3.3506)

Christians worship through their vocations, as they are called **"...to use the gifts and abilities God has given, honoring and serving God ... in community, nation, and the world ... in every aspect of human life..."** (W-5.6001,2)

The Christian community offers nurture to equip members **"...to live as commissioned disciples in the world"** ... assisting them to assume responsibility in the world **"...with self-discovery and world awareness ... with developing commitment to moral and ethical values ..."** (W-6.2002)

Guiding people in vocational choices the church supports them as responsible citizens and as servants of God for the world. (W.6.2003)

Through pastoral care, the church recognizes in every person's life the reality of sin - the source of all human brokenness.

**The believing community announces the good news of God whose love gives people grace
to confess their sin and complicity in brokenness,
to repent, expressing sorrow and intention to change,
to accept God's forgiveness and extend that forgiveness to another,
to forgive the other and accept the other's forgiveness,
to work toward reconciliation in brokenness,
to trust the power of God to bring healing and peace.** (W.6.3009)

The church participates in God's mission to the world through its ministry and worship. Worship presents the reality of the divine rule which God has promised in Jesus Christ as the final renewal of creation. The worshiping community is a sign of the presence of the reign of God. The church in its ministry bears witness to God's reign through the proclamation of the gospel, through works of compassion and reconciliation, and through the stewardship of creation and of life. Signs of God's reign are also manifest in the world wherever the Holy Spirit leads people to seek justice and to make peace. (W.7.1001)

God sends the church in the power of the Holy Spirit

- a. to announce the good news that in Christ Jesus the world is reconciled to God,**
- b. to tell all nations and peoples of Christ's call to repentance, faith, and obedience,**
- c. to proclaim in deed and word that Jesus gave himself to set people free.....**

(W-7.2001)

In the life of the church, the transforming power of the Holy Spirit is manifest in mutual love and service... (W-7.2002)

God sends the church in the power of the Holy Spirit to exercise compassion in the world, feeding the hungry, comforting the grieving, caring for the sick, visiting the prisoners, freeing the captives, sheltering the homeless, befriending the lonely. (W-7.3001)

**Faithful disciples express compassion
with respect for the dignity of those in need,
with openness to help even those judged undeserving,
with willingness to risk their own comfort and safety, ... (W-7.3004)**

God sends the church in the power of the Holy Spirit to share with Christ in establishing God's just, peaceable, and loving rule in the world. God's reconciliation in Jesus Christ is the ground of justice and peace. The church in worship proclaims, receives, and enacts reconciliation in Jesus Christ and commits itself to strive for justice and peace in its own life and in the world (W-7.4001)

Justice is the order God sets in human life for fair and honest dealing and for giving rights to those who have no power to claim rights for themselves. The biblical vision of doing justice calls for

- a. dealing honestly in personal and public business,**
- b. exercising power for the common good,**
- c. supporting people who seek the dignity, freedom, and respect that they have been denied,**
- d. working for fair laws and just administration of the law,**
- e. welcoming the stranger in the land,**
- f. seeking to overcome the disparity between rich and poor,**
- g. bearing witness against political oppression and exploitation,**
- h. redressing wrongs against individuals, groups, and peoples in the church, in this nation, and in the whole world. (W-7.4001)**

There is no peace without justice. Wherever there is brokenness, violence, and injustice the people of God are called to peacemaking in the world where nations place national security above all else, where the zealotry of religion, race, or ideology explodes in violence, and where the lust for getting and keeping economic or political power erupts in rioting or war in communities racked by crime and fear (W-7.4003)

The ministries of reconciliation, justice, and peace are initiated and

nurtured in the church's worship of God. In the proclamation of God's Word people are given assurance of freedom from the guilt and fear which keep them from fulfilling these ministries. In Baptism and the Lord's Supper believers are united in Christ, are made one in the church through the Holy Spirit, and recognize one another across all boundaries and divisions as sisters and brothers in the faith. In prayer the faithful lift intercessions for all who experience brokenness, violence, and injustice; give thanks to God for reconciliation, peace, and justice in Jesus Christ; and commit themselves to be reconcilers seeking justice and pursuing peace. (W-7.4004)

God calls the Church in the power of the Holy Spirit to participate in God's work of creation and preservation. God has given humankind awesome power and perilous responsibility to rule and tame the earth, to sustain and reshape it, to replenish and renew it. ... (W-7.5001)

As stewards of God's creation who hold the earth in trust, the people of God are called to

- a. use the earth's resources responsibly without plundering, polluting, or destroying,**
- b. develop technological methods and processes that work together with the earth's environment to preserve and enhance life,**
- c. produce and consume in ways that make available to all people what is sufficient for life,**
- d. work for responsible attitudes and practices in procreation and reproduction,**
- e. use and shape earth's goods to create beauty, order, health, and peace in ways that reflect God's love for all creatures. (W-7.5003)**

In the present age the church's ministries of evangelism and caring for creation, of compassion and reconciliation are signs of God's reign and offer hope in the midst of life-denying situations. (W-7.6002)

In worship the church is transformed and renewed, equipped and sent to serve God's reign in the world. (W-7.7001)

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