

**An Agreement Establishing a Local Covenant
Partnership in Mission in Baja California
and San Diego and Imperial Counties
Between the Presbytery of the Northwest Border
and the Presbytery of San Diego**

The Presbytery of San Diego and the Presbytery of the Northwest Border hereby establish and enter into a local covenant partnership in mission. The relationship between our two national churches has been severed. But a subsequent agreement has allowed the six projects of Presbyterian Border Ministry to reorganize and reconstitute themselves. We believe we can continue in bi-national mission together.

Our two presbyteries covenant to continue the good work started some 27 years ago, pledging to work together in partnership to proclaim and give witness to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord for the salvation of all. We are separated by a man-made border. We are not separated by our faith in Christ. We have a lot in common, which will continue to allow us to be in ministry together.

This document has been reviewed by the Pueblos Hermanos board and by the executive committees or councils of each presbytery, translated into Spanish and presented for first readings and eventual vote to approve or disapprove by the commissioners to each presbytery.

With recommendation by the Mission and Evangelism Committee, first reading by PSD will be February 21, 2012 and vote to approve/disapprove in April 17, 2012. PFN may call a special meeting for first reading. Their next presbytery meeting is scheduled for April 19-21, 2012. Initial discussion looked to an effective date of this agreement of July 1, 2012.

Background

Following the termination of the 139-year-long relationship between the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico (INPM) and the Presbyterian Church, (U.S.A.) [PC(USA)], effective August 18, 2011, leaders from the INPM and the PC(USA), joined by representatives of the Council of Presbyterian Border Ministry (PBM), met on September 8, 2011 in San Antonio and reached an agreement on the future of PBM and its six ministry sites.

The agreement allows the INPM to keep faith with its recent General Assembly's decision to sever the official relationship with the PC(USA) and allows PC(USA) presbyteries and congregations to continue to respond to God's call to mission along the US/Mexico border.

Because the issues of poverty among women and children, evangelism, and violence have emerged as PCUSA World Mission's highest priorities, World

Mission is committed to the future of mission along the US/Mexico border. God's mission will continue as we respond to God's call to share a holistic gospel with those who live along the 2,000 mile border.

The official PBM/INPN Agreement is as follows:

An agreement regarding Presbyterian Border Ministry was reached by the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico (INPM), Presbyterian World Mission and Presbyterian Border Ministry (PBM) to establish a transition period through the end of December, 2011, with the following process to be followed regarding each of the six local ministry sites of PBM:

- *Each Mexican presbytery on the U.S./Mexico border needs to decide as soon as possible about its participation in the ministry site. If the Mexican presbytery decides to refrain from participation, the ministry site board will decide on its future ministry and partners.*
- *If the Mexican border presbytery decides to participate, it will dialogue with its counterpart presbytery(ies) in the U.S. and with the board of directors of the ministry site, in order to see if the U.S. presbytery(ies) agree(s) to submit to the condition of the INPM: to disavow the PC(USA) 2010 General Assembly action on Amendment 10-A regarding ordination standards. If the U.S. presbytery(ies) choose(s) not to submit to the INPM's condition, the ministry site board will decide on its future ministry and partners.*
- *If presbyteries from both countries agree, they will then be able to establish a local covenant, and the ministry site board will develop its ministry plan. If no agreement is reached, the ministry site board will decide on its future ministry and partners.*
- *During this period of transition, Presbyterian World Mission will facilitate a process of participatory evaluation -- together with the ministry site board -- to determine its involvement, according to World Mission's strategic plan.*
- *The PC(USA) and INPM will maintain open dialogue during this time of transition.*

Subsequently, regarding disavowal of Amendment 10-A

The Executive Committee of the Presbytery of the Northwest Border (Presbiterio Fronterizo Noroccidental) initiated communications with the Executive Presbyter of the Presbytery of San Diego, seeking to reconstitute the Pueblos Hermanos Presbyterian Border Ministry Project in San Diego and Tijuana. Because the Presbytery of San Diego had voted to disapprove the ratification of Amendment 10-A, the Mexican Presbytery accepted that action as verification of disavowal of the amendment. No further notification of disavowal would be required.

Further, about ten years ago, the Presbytery of San Diego adopted the "Essential Tenets and Reformed Distinctives" of our faith. About four years

ago, it adopted a shorter version called "What We Believe." These statements of faith place PSD squarely in the framework of the historical, orthodox, Reformed faith of the church. The PCUSA had voted 4-5 times over the last 15 years on its ordination standards and sexuality ethics. Each time, the Presbytery of San Diego voted by large margins in favor of fidelity in marriage between a man and a woman and chastity in singleness. The new standards do not require the the Presbytery to change anything. We believe that our two presbyteries are in strong theological agreement, and that this makes it possible for us to continue to participate together in the mission of God.

Our Unity in Faith

Our two presbyteries are united in our belief in the authority of scripture. We believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. We are focused on spreading the good news of Jesus Christ to all people. We want to see people believe in Jesus Christ as their only Lord and Savior. We want to see people become mature disciples of Christ. We believe that all of us are sent by God's Holy Spirit into the world to be witnesses for Christ where we live, work, and play.

Both presbyteries believe in evangelism and missions. We believe in helping the poor and healing the sick. We believe in visiting those in prison and seeking the welfare of the communities where we live. We are called to be Christ's witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. We are all part of the Body of Christ. We are called to equip people for ministry. As Christians we have the gift of the Holy Spirit and the gifts that the Spirit gives us. We want people to be connected to the vine of Christ and experience the abundant life of Christ. This is a good opportunity for us to pray, to talk, and dream together, about what God might be calling us to do.

Pueblos Hermanos' Bi-National Ministry

Pueblos Hermanos currently has a board of eight – four from the US side, four from the Mexican side. (See a list of current board members in the Appendix.) Founded in 1985, Pueblos Hermanos' bi-national ministry is to plant and grow missions and churches in Tijuana and other cities and communities in Baja California, Mexico, and to help train and enable the Mexican pastors, elders and lay leaders to teach and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the communities where they serve.

PH also created and continues to support a community health ministry, Salud y Vida, in Tijuana. Prior to the separation of the two national churches, the ministry was led by bi-national co-directors, a PCUSA missionary and an appointed INPM ordained pastor. Rev. Bill Soldwisch served as the PCUSA missionary for 25 years, retiring in 2009. Rev. Rachel Anderson filled the position for two years but resigned concurrent with the termination of the

relationship between the two national churches. There is no plan to assign a PCUSA missionary to this ministry. The Mexican Co-Director, Rev. Enrique Romero, currently is charged with new church development at a site in Rosarito. Nurse Marta Gonzales leads Salud y Vida.

Baja Presbyterian Missions, Inc.

Through its long-standing partnership with Pueblos Hermanos and with the Mexican Presbiterio, Baja Presbyterian Missions Inc. will participate fully in this new partnership. While PH raises its own operational funds, over the years most of the funds for purchase of land and buildings, or construction of new buildings for the missions and churches of the Presbiterio, has been provided by Baja Presbyterian Missions, Inc. (formerly Native Missions, Inc.), an independent California Religious Nonprofit Corporation chartered in 1964. BPM is supported by the Roland and Kay Taylor Memorial Trust Fund held by the Presbyterian Foundation and through annual giving by area Presbyterian church mission committees and individuals.

As a result of this working relationship over a period of nearly 30 years, today there are 15 established churches and three sites in development in Baja. As an example of Baja Missions laboring alongside Pueblos Hermanos, BPM has provided \$25,000 as downpayment for the land at the new Real de Rosarito site, and is sharing in the monthly payments with PFN. PH is to carry out evangelism activities to draw in the people to the mission. BPM also raises money to help the Presbiterio pay salary supplements to 8-10 pastors. Three churches are self-sufficient. This working relationship is expected to continue.

Agreement:

This agreement is entered into by the Presbytery of San Diego and the Presbiterio Fronterizo Noroccidental on this _____th day of _____, 2012, and approved by these officers.

Signatories:

Rev. Dr. Clark Cowden

Rev. Devir Perez

Executive Presbyter,

Presidente,

Presbytery of San Diego

Presbiterio Fronterizo Noroccidental

JANUARY 9, 2012

Appendix:

Current Pueblos Hermanos Board Members

United States

Elder Bob Battenfield, Fletcher Hills

Rev. Juan Daniel Espitia, Solana Beach

Ruben Tec, Adoracion, Chula Vista

Vacant

Mexico

Rev. Job Alameda, Monte Sion

Rev. Devir Perez, Dios Con Nosotros

Rev. Robelio Roblero, Dios Habla Hoy

Elder Nicasio Rojas, Dios Habla Hoy

Battenfield, an elder at Fletcher Hills Presbyterian Church in El Cajon, is also president of Baja Presbyterian Missions, and has represented San Diego Presbytery on the board of Presbyterian Border Ministry, including two terms as treasurer. He is a member of PSD's Hispanic Ministry Council.

Alameda, ordained pastor of Monte Sion Church in Tijuana, is president of the Pueblos Hermanos board of directors.

Espitia is Associate Pastor for Hispanic Ministries at Solana Beach, and chairs PSD's Hispanic Ministry Council. He was the first Mexican co-director of Pueblos Hermanos in the 1980s.

Tec, a U.S. Citizen born in Yucatan, MX, is a member of Chula Vista Presbyterian Church's Adoracion Worship Group, and an elder at El Buen Pastor Church in Tijuana. He serves as Treasurer of Pueblos Hermanos.

Perez, ordained pastor of Dios Con Nosotros Church in Tijuana, is president of the Presbiterio Fronterizo Noroccidental.

Roblero, ordained pastor of Dios Habla Hoy Church in Tijuana, is past president of the Presbiterio.

Rojas, a member of Dios Habla Hoy, is Pueblos Hermanos Board Secretary, Secretary (Stated Clerk) of the Presbiterio, and is worship leader at Adoracion, Chula Vista Presbyterian Church. He has partially completed courses to become a Commissioned Lay Pastor in the PC(USA).