

# Report of the Urban Ministry Task Force

## Executive Summary

In 2004, following the closing of First Church Chester and recurring questions about the Presbytery of Philadelphia's commitment to urban ministry, the General Council of the Presbytery formed an Urban Ministry Task Force. The charge to the Task Force was to explore effective approaches for urban ministry within the Presbytery; to make recommendations that would help our Presbytery pursue those approaches; and to raise hard questions that will challenge the Presbytery to do a new thing and foster accountability. In April 2005, a preliminary draft of the Urban Ministry Task Force report was presented to the Council. A process of limited feedback and revision followed along with dialogues with the Council's Planning Committee that was in the process of developing a new overall strategy for the entire Presbytery. This document is the final report of the Urban Ministry Task Force. It is being presented in July 2005 to the Planning Committee to be included as an attachment to or component of its report to the Presbytery in September 2005.

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We, the members of the Urban Ministry Task Force, having seen, experienced and studied the ills that beset our urban communities and churches, believe Christ continues to call our Presbytery to enlarge our vision, creativity and **holistic stewardship** in our approach to urban ministry.

### *Therefore, we recommend:*

- 1) That the General Council call for a **Presbytery wide season of prayer, study and fasting focused on urban ministry** and its priority within the Presbytery.
- 2) That opportunities be created for all people from around the presbytery to **come together to dialogue, share, question, challenge, understand, worship, fellowship, react and even create** their own recommendations for urban ministry during the period of study, prayer and dialogue;

*That following the specified period of study, reflection and prayer, the following four additional recommendations be introduced by the current chair or a member of the Urban Ministry Task Force for a vote on the floor of presbytery with the understanding that as an outgrowth of the period of presbytery-wide study, reflection and prayer new insights and changes may be recommended as amendments from the floor at that time.....*

- 3) That by the year 2008, the congregations of our presbytery, working cooperatively with one another, will have developed **no less than five vibrant missional urban ministry hubs** to reach those in need, those who are lost and to make new disciples in communities of greatest need within our presbytery. Because these ministries may take a wide variety of forms, and may or may not all be congregations, our skills, structure, support and mindset will be reformed and always reforming to adapt to the variety.
  
- 4) That a **Multi-Disciplinary Urban Ministry Coordinating Team (UMCT) be created** to set overall urban ministry priorities, oversee coordination of urban ministry activities among various Presbytery committees and to hold our Presbytery and its members accountable for the accomplishment of agreed upon urban ministry objectives.
  - a. UMCT shall **coordinate with and include representation from other Presbytery committees**, academic leadership with expertise in urban ministry and a cross section of representatives from churches throughout the Presbytery.
  - b. UMCT will seize upon **kairos moments** and build upon trends and strengths in ministries and communities.
  - c. UMCT will **annually partner with 3-5 ministries** where it is evident that the potential for making new disciples, vibrancy and growth in ministry exists.
  - d. UMCT will **insure adequate leadership** for these ministries via the recruitment of new pastors, training of lay leaders, creation of innovative partnerships and resource teams, and the use of specialized ministry consultants.
  
- 5) That UMCT, in conjunction with the Mission Commitment Committee, the Presbytery trustees, and the General Council make **funding for this urban ministry strategy a top priority and actively pursue no less than \$1,500,000 for this endeavor over the next three years** by reallocating existing funds and identifying major new funding sources. A detailed budget and funding plan will be developed by these parties. A preliminary budget is included as Attachment 4. As part of this process, the following avenues for funding will be given serious and active consideration:
  - a. Creation of a **501 (c)(3) nonprofit community development corporation (CDC)** for urban ministry.
  - b. Development of **grant writing expertise** within the Presbytery.
  - c. Designing a **major funding initiative for urban ministry** and submit it for funding through a major foundation such as The Lilly Endowment.

- d. Creation of an **Urban Ministry Innovation Fund** by setting aside no less than 75% of the funds from the **sale of existing Presbytery properties**.
  - e. Identifying and pursuing block grants and other government and municipal funding sources, including **Faith Based Initiatives**.
  - f. Undertaking a **Presbytery-wide special giving campaign**.
  - g. Pursuing **Synod and GA funding** to support urban ministry initiatives.
- 6) That the Committees of the Presbytery will all work with the UMCT and one another to insure that **new skills, resources and Presbytery-wide support be made available to all of the churches of the Presbytery engaged in urban ministry**, not just the hubs targeted for special attention.

In a recent *Philadelphia Inquirer* article reporting on the closing of Reeve Memorial Presbyterian Church, an historic African American urban church within the Presbytery of Philadelphia, Rev. Ed Gehres, our Executive Presbyter mourned that we are experiencing an increase in urban church closings. The Task Force agrees with his assessment and feels this is a critical time in the life of the Presbytery of Philadelphia. This Presbytery was formed around an urban core, the City of Philadelphia. It was formed by people who felt called as faithful disciples to respond to the needs of the city and its people. The needs of the city have changed and in certain communities, have grown desperate. The gaps between rich and poor, the educated and the undereducated, races and ethnic groups and even churches have widened. The ways of the world have become more dominant. The situation begs the question to the church, “what does it mean to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God in times like these?”

The members of the Urban Ministry Task Force have concluded that, in times like these, it is important for our neighbors in need, but even more so for the spiritual healthy and future vitality of those of us who remain in the presbytery to come together in a powerful and renewed call to justice, kindness and humility as we engage in urban ministry, mission and discipleship together.

# **Report of the Urban Ministry Task Force**

## **Preamble**

### **Creating Something Beautiful with God**

While certainly there are always wonderful rays of light, there are communities of great need within our Presbytery where incomes and education levels are lowest, unemployment is highest and where signs of hopelessness are most apparent. The need for Good News is urgent. Sadly, these are also the communities within our Presbytery where our churches are closing the fastest and those that remain are most likely to be hanging on by a thread for survival. Yet, because God meets and transforms us all in places of suffering, wilderness and confusion, we are convinced that coming together in ministry with these communities also offers great opportunities for blessings, spiritual renewal, transforming power and hope for the Presbytery as a whole.

In developing this strategy, we hope to stimulate our Presbytery's imagination as to the meaning, depth and breath of the Biblical story's importance and timeliness as it speaks to us as stewards and as agents of Good News. In times past, our Presbytery and denomination demonstrated a commitment to use our combined talents and resources for social justice and ministry within an urban context. Our polity empowered individuals to seek God and to use their gifts to build God's kingdom here on earth, and in so doing helped lead others to be good stewards of their own gifts. The Biblical story of Christ coming that the world might have abundant life here and now, urged us to follow the resurrected Christ into the world and model his ministry, especially in the places within our Presbytery and right outside our doors that were most in need. (John 10:10; Mt. 25:40) The needs and opportunities continue and our collective resources of time, talent and treasure continue to be great. Yet, where are our priorities? Don't we as stewards still have more to offer in these difficult times within our urban setting?

The author, broadcaster Malcolm Muggeridge, is considered the person that introduced Mother Theresa to the world. When the way became clear for him to make a film about Mother Theresa and the Missionaries of Charity, Mother Theresa wrote him a letter and in expressing her positive feelings about the project wrote: "...Now let us do something beautiful for God." The members and churches of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, have to move out into a new realm of freedom from the dominant culture if to make good our calling as Christ's steward to be a prophetic voice in God's world. (Rom. 12:2) This urban strategy for the Presbytery of Philadelphia gives concrete form to how as stewards who are offering our bodies as living sacrifices unto God, and as stewards who are Christ's ambassadors of reconciliation- we can do something beautiful for and with God.

A broader discussion of the theology behind our work is included as [Attachment 1](#).

## **I. Assignment to the Task Force**

The Council asked the task force to:

- 1) research urban ministry strategies from other communities, academic settings and elsewhere to determine the most effective approaches to ministry in urban communities and churches;
- 2) determine approaches other Presbyteries are finding to be effective ways to resource urban congregations and ministries;
- 3) make some recommendations that can be helpful to our Presbytery and to our long-range planning process.
- 4) raise the hard questions that will challenge the Presbytery and will foster accountability.

A list of Task Force members is included as [Attachment 2](#).

## **II. What is Urban?**

We see the entire Philadelphia Presbytery as one metro-urban area that is interdependent and interconnected.

In many ways, we found it inaccurate and inadequate to define a strategy for mission as simply urban. Our reality is that we live in a dynamic metropolitan area, rich in its diversity of people and contexts. The region is a tapestry of interdependent neighborhoods and communities, whose futures and fortunes are woven together. Our economy, culture and institutions cannot exist in geographic isolation but thrive when they engage the common region.

This is even more true for the Body of Christ, best described by Paul in the metaphor of the human body. Indeed how can the eye say to the hand, "I don't need you."? How can Chester say to Chestnut Hill, or Media say to Mantua, "We don't need you"? Just as the body needs all its parts working together to function properly, so too all parts of the metro-urban area and the Church thrive when interdependent.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, who makes us His Body, this is where we must begin. Yet, we are also aware that some parts of the Body and some parts of the region are particularly hurting. As God loves us all but at times gives additional attention to one who is in special pain, so too must we focus on those communities and congregations which especially need support, attention and encouragement.... wherever they are within our urban Presbytery.

Following this biblical example, we identified the following areas of the body of the

Presbytery that we believe are “communities of greatest need and opportunity” and therefore especially worthy of special support, attention and encouragement. These same areas were therefore important areas for the Presbytery to seriously consider strengthening its ministry presence and witness. This list is in alphabetical order, not prioritized, and does not imply that other areas may not be similarly lifted up for special attention as time progresses.

- |                                       |                            |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1) Chester                            | 6) Norristown              |
| 2) Delaware County Rt. 13 Corridor    | 7) South Philadelphia      |
| 3) Frankford/Kensington/Norris Square | 8) SW Philadelphia         |
| 4) Germantown/West Oak Lane/Olney     | 9) Upper Darby/Drexel Hill |
| 5) North Philadelphia                 | 10) West Philadelphia      |

Yet these same communities possess great strengths and have much to offer the larger body. They are endowed with a rich heritage of faith and culture that brings a profound vitality and enthusiasm to life. From their ranks have arisen exemplary people of faith who fight the continuing struggle to improve their communities. And often, life together grows from an unselfish caring for each other and willingness to share what they have. Hence, they are not only communities of need, but communities of opportunity for the entire body.

### III. Task Force Findings and Observations

*Philadelphia Presbytery Core Values and Current Realities*– The Planning Committee of the Presbytery asked for feedback on how others view core values and current realities. As the Urban Ministry Task Force, we responded to this task by compiling observations about those values and realities as they relate specifically to urban ministry.

#### A. Core Values – What is valued and desired? .....Missional Urban Ministry

We place high value on the development of missional and transformational urban ministries within the Presbytery. These ministries:

- are **rooted in God** through an abiding faith and commitment of participants to continually be available to support one another through prayer, study and faith sharing;
- are **transformational** in that participants are prepared and guided by the Spirit for **servanthood** and kingdom building to address the hurts and needs of the world and in particular, the communities outside their doors;
- bring together church members and neighbors as **one body** in a dynamic resourceful **organized faith community** of love and support where all involved expect to give, receive and be **transformed**.
- possess a **dynamic energy, spirit of innovation, vibrant leadership** and **vision to engage the world in creative new partnerships and approaches**

- to ministry;
- exhibit an openness to **collaboration**, commitment to **active listening**, **mutual respect**, and **exemplary stewardship** of the variety of gifts and resources all make available to the ministry;
- have a **focused** mission with specific objectives where ministries will be held **accountable**, **make a difference** and **gather new people** into their fold;
- **Acknowledge and address systemic injustice** e.g. causes of poverty, racial injustice, poor public schools, poor or inadequate housing, homelessness and police brutality.

**B. Current Realities – How does reality mesh with what is valued?**

Consider the following data from recent Percept statistics for the Presbytery of Philadelphia. Percept is a demographic and community assessment tool used by many church bodies.

**3,409,188...** people live within the communities of the Presbytery of Philadelphia

**1,090,477....**people live in communities of the Presbytery that Percept ranks as **very high to critical risk** (on scale of 1–10 these communities rank 8–10) The risk factor is determined by the following factors.  
 Highest % of households with incomes below \$15,000 per year  
 Highest % of adults not high school graduates  
 High concerns for basic needs and community problems

**Communities include all or portions of:** Center City, Chester, Germantown, Frankford, Kensington, No. Philadelphia, Norris Square, Olney, Oak Lane, Melrose Park, So. Philadelphia, SW Philadelphia, West Philadelphia, Roosevelt Blvd. & NE Phila., Yeadon/Upper Darby.

**40.....** of the 141 churches of the Presbytery are located in these very high to critical risk communities

**11.....** churches have closed in these communities over the past seven years

**21.....** Of the 40 churches remaining in these areas are able to call a full-time pastor, 3 of those are active and relatively stable center city churches. Half of the 21 received financial support from Presbytery over the past 3 years or are struggling w/o support.

**All....** Of the 19 churches without pastors are struggling to survive. Several are actively considering closing.

**Yet.....Presbytery wide.....**

80% of adults graduated from high school vs. 80.4% nationwide

27% are college grads compared with 24.4% nationwide  
\$68,106 is average household income and overall giving potential is  
rated by Percept as somewhat high  
Suburban mid-life families is top individual lifestyle segment  
comprising 11.9% of population.

*In addition to the 40 churches in communities ranked as very high to critical risk....*

**22....** Churches are in communities whose risk factors are rated average to somewhat high . (5-7). Many of these are in communities on the fringe of Philadelphia and/or in transition. They are vulnerable ministries needing new strategies to cope with these changes. Several do not have full-time pastors.

**79....** Churches are in communities whose risk factors are rated low to average. (0-4) For the most part, these churches are the most stable in the Presbytery and several have more than one installed pastor.

As these statistics show, there is a broad disparity between the communities and churches within the presbytery. The resources are often disconnected from the needs. As we think about current realities, we recognize that the same is true for other mainline denominations.

In 1994 church consultant Loren Mead, told the mainline American church that it is caught in a storm and advised us not to expect the storm to pass over any time soon. *Transforming Congregations for the Future*. It is usual for the prophet to receive the message before the people are willing to hear and react to the message. Theologian, Walter Breuggemann, uses the metaphor of exile to describe the American church. Here our displacement is social, moral, and cultural rather than geopolitical. *Hopeful Imagination: Prophetic Voices*. He feels in exile, we have lost our vitality. The ministry of the American mainline church is fatigued and close to despair. Our presbytery's membership knows something is terribly wrong and we know we have not been able to fix it. Today most of us who have been in the church most of our lives have now looked up and will attest: 'Yes indeed we are in a storm!' The storm has caused some destruction. At least twenty one congregations in our presbytery have been dissolved since 1982. The majority of these are in urban areas where the needs for ministry are great. Poverty and underemployment breed frustration. Education and medical concerns abound. The family structure is strained. Now more than ever, the church needs to bear witness to new opportunities and new life.

Despite the need for a church that is alive, relevant and growing, some our congregations are hanging on by their fingernails and some have decided to fold up their tents because they don't have the energy or resources to ride out the storm.

Others feel discouraged about the state of health of their ministries. They often feel abandoned by the rest of the presbytery. Brueggemann reminds us that: "...Exile did not lead the Jews to abandon their faith in the Old Testament or to settle for abdicating despair nor retreat to privatistic religion. On the contrary, exile evoked the most brilliant literature and the most daring theological articulation in the Old Testament. There is something characteristically and deeply Jewish about such a buoyant response to trouble, a response that in Christian parlance can only be termed "evangelical," that is grounded in a sense and sureness of news about God that circumstance cannot undermine or negate." *Cadences of Home: Preaching to Exiles* p.3 Neither are we to retreat or give up because of the storm. God is always calling us to be more than we have been.

Some of the problems we face have nothing to do with the church and some are caused by the way the church has responded to the storm's destruction. Various groups and individuals in our presbytery shared their perspective on the current realities in our presbytery caused by the storm. There is a need for strategic action designed to help us weather the storm for we know we cannot master a storm, we can only try to get out of its way (which is not an option for us) or prepare ourselves as best we can to ride it out.

*"Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart ... But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed." 2Cor 4:1, 7-9.*

See [Attachment 3](#) for more on the Urban Ministry Task Force's assessment of the current realities within the Presbytery.

### **C. Our Presbytery has the potential to be a pace setter in urban ministry**

We have not found other Presbyteries with much more in the way of a developed strategy for urban ministry. However, there is much to learn from case studies of specific congregations, other denominations, universities and specialized training programs.

We have research and/or contacted.....

Presbyteries of Giddings Lovejoy; New Brunswick; Pittsburgh; Chicago; Baltimore; Detroit; GA Urban Ministry Network; National Black Presbyterian Caucus; Center for Urban Theological Studies in Philadelphia; New Brunswick Seminary; Lutheran Theological Seminary; McCormick Seminary; Princeton Seminary; Rev. Bob Linthicum (consultant in Urban Transformation); Philadelphia Interfaith Action; a variety of written materials on urban ministry. We have also heard a variety of case studies regarding successful transformational ministries.

## IV. Directions for the Future

Specific goals are included in the Executive Summary and in Section V under Recommendations. Yet, in order to achieve these goals, we will need to move in new and innovative directions in the future. Different steps will be needed for different communities. The steps to be taken fall under three main categories:

- A) Engaging the entire presbytery in a collaborative effort
- B) Learning and utilizing new tools
- C) Creating new structures and relationships

Below, we have summarized what some of these steps may be and how others within and beyond our presbytery have used them to strengthen Urban Ministry. Congregations working together with communities and with the support of Presbytery staff and committees will need to determine which of these steps are most viable and helpful for particular communities and situations.

### **A. Engage the entire Presbytery in an urgent call to urban ministry** (Micah 6:6-8; Amos 5:21-24; Luke 4:18-19)

1) Given the dire situation within our urban communities and churches, **make developing transformational urban ministries the centerpiece of the Presbytery's mission agenda and its top priority for at least the next five years...** preach, teach, study, pray, proclaim, organize around it, fund, and celebrate this vision ....everywhere!

Just as Jesus embraced his ministry without condition, so must we commit our all. He used every situation to teach, love, challenge, and bless the people and has asked us to be his disciples. Urban ministries are challenged by the difficult problems they seek to address. Success and transformation depend on faithful people coming together who are willing to do what is necessary for change.

2) Form **small groups** for spiritual support, prayer, study and mutual accountability as we engage in this urban strategy and commitment together.

Over two decades ago, an ambitious group of people came together to launch an urban home repair ministry in the Point Breeze section of So. Philadelphia in partnership with the homeowners. To attract volunteers into the ministry, a small group was formed in a suburban Philadelphia Presbyterian church to become partners in mission. Initially the church group met for work every other Saturday and every other Monday evening for study, prayer, and conversation about the work and new friends in Philadelphia. This mission/study group was a great resource giving the enthusiasm and perseverance necessary to sustain the ministry. Having a community gave the participants joy, strength, and helped them make an impact while transforming their own lives in the process.

### **B. Learn and utilize new tools for urban ministry** (Mark 1:16-20; 1Cor. 12:12-27)

1) Create a “**seminary without walls**” for strengthening our local skills in urban ministry. Utilize our resource center, web–site, training opportunities and gatherings of people engaged in various types of urban ministries to share knowledge and case studies regarding what’s working and what’s not. Partner with local colleges and seminaries, other denominations and national networks to insure that we have a handle on innovative approaches to urban ministry. Use our churches and community ministries as learning sites.

In Philadelphia, a grassroots “seminary without walls” has been organized over the last few years to provide in–depth theological education to those who cannot or choose not to go through a traditional seminary program. This ecumenical program maintains low overhead by meeting in city churches and inviting teachers from local institutions. The Presbytery’s Lay Pastor program provides a similar example.

In addition, training in what it means to be a missional church, community organizing, urban evangelism, forming not for profits for ministry, grantwriting and a host of other topics can be provided by bringing teachers to the Presbytery as the need arises.

## 2) Develop skills and leadership for **faith-based community organizing**

Philadelphia Interfaith Action provides organizing training and has worked with churches in our Presbytery and those from other denominations for change in their communities. As congregations have engaged in community organizing, they have found their ministries becoming more relevant and attractive to their communities.

At Transfiguration Lutheran Church in the South Bronx (NY) Rev. Heidi Neumark defied all expectations in this poor, violence–prone neighborhood by creating a dynamic and viable bilingual ministry of which faith based organizing was a key component. Whether incorporating graffiti artists to render the week’s Bible story on the front doors of the church or having people put the pictures and names of their loved ones lost to AIDS on the cross on Good Friday, Pastor Neumark radically identified with the struggles of her neighborhood and found ways to incorporate that experience in every aspect of worship and ministry. Her journal, [Breathing Spaces](#), should be required reading for everyone who cares about ministry with the urban poor.

Pr. Neumark went beyond ministry to the suffering of her people to work for transformation of those structures, which create and perpetuate it. She was instrumental in the founding of South Bronx Churches, a faith–based community organization affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation. She, like so many other clergy, have found that involvement in community organizing strengthens congregational ministry by providing leadership development opportunities and a power base from which to “seek the shalom of the city.”(Jer. 31). Consequently, SBC, a coalition of churches in one of American’s most distressed neighborhood, has been able to build tracks of affordable housing, improve the level of safety on the streets, cultivate economic development and even have regular meetings with New York’s mayor.

## 3) Actively recruit, train and support **first class urban ministry leadership teams** on all levels

Sports teams that want to succeed and reach their dreams, assess the salaries they need to offer to remain competitive and build a team that takes advantage of the strengths of each of their key players. They build teams for victory. We must step up our recruitment efforts, examine our

pay scales, strengthen lay leadership, be creative about team building and focus on urban ministry leadership development, as though we want to succeed!

Develop relationships with CUTS, Lutheran's UTI, Eastern and Temple Universities and other local and national institutions of higher learning that have undergraduate and graduate programs related to urban studies and urban ministry. Visit the learning institutions and inform the schools of the Presbytery's urban strategy. The informational sessions would highlight how our Presbytery hopes to recruit potential leaders to consider ministry opportunities within the Philadelphia Presbytery.

We also recognize that the effectiveness of her/his call is greatly challenged for solo pastors leading congregations into missional ministry and striving to pastor, teach, preach, witness, disciple, learn, counsel, and equip the local church for community ministry. We need a commitment to invest in planting an associate pastor or other staff members within those churches, whose gifts for ministry complement the pastor. With such a staff, the pastoral team could more readily address the needs urban ministry demands.

#### 4) Learn from successful **collaborative ministries**

In 1997, several congregations in the Northwest section of Philadelphia noticed an increase in the number of people who approached them for emergency assistance and formed the Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry. While addressing the requests as best they could, clergy at these congregations realized that they needed a screening process to identify those going from congregation to congregation requesting help. In addition, a central source of funding needed to be available to quickly respond to emergencies and appropriate information needed to be given to those in need regarding other public and private resources to further address their need. With its fifteen-year history of having an outreach worker, it made sense to host this ministry at The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown. Supporting congregations pooled their financial resources to fund the staff position and to provide money to be used for grants. Currently there are twelve participating congregations and numerous schools and private sector organizations that support GACM through the provision of funds, food and volunteer support.

In the Hollywood-Wiltshire Cluster of Presbyterian churches in inner-city Los Angeles, a group of churches came together to form a ministry collaborative. One church served as an anchor and others served as satellites, meeting the needs of specific constituencies. The churches varied in size, resources and populations. Together they were able to develop a powerful new approach to ministry in that community and began to thrive.

#### 5) Create new **urban/suburban ministry partnerships**

Calvin Presbyterian Church in West Philadelphia has collaborated with Bryn Mawr PC for several years in running an after school program at Calvin. Calvin and Bryn Mawr work together to secure funding for the program and to provide oversight. Members from both churches volunteer their time and skills on a regular basis. This program is a moment of grace for all who participate. The children have a safe place to go after school, the Bryn Mawr participants get to know children and adults in West Philadelphia that they probably would not have known and the same is true for the children and adults from Calvin.

#### 6) Develop **grantsmanship** proficiency and a cadre of coaches

The Presbytery's Building Healthy Community Committee has recently begun asking those throughout the Presbytery with grantwriting skills to become roving trainers and development

experts for churches looking for assistance to fund community ministries. By donating time on a limited project specific basis, the Presbytery will be able to share resources of time, talent and treasures. This effort needs to be coupled with an active exploration of the development of a 501(C)(3) corporation for the existing and future community ministry of the Presbytery.

## 7) **Build upon existing community ministries** to stimulate congregational vitality

As referenced in the 2004 report to the Presbytery from the Community Ministry Task Force, Chester Eastside and John Gloucester House are and should remain important components of our Presbytery's urban ministry. They provide vehicles for ministry within two very important communities of our Presbytery and are venues for congregation members to grow in faith and in their understanding of urban ministry. Congregations involved in these ministries can build upon those experiences in the communities around their churches. In addition, existing programs such as Habitat for Humanity and the Presbytery's Head Start Learning Tree program can provide congregations with a fertile opportunity to minister and address salient needs in the community. These particular types of community partnerships assist in engaging and encouraging the church to be direct participants in the changing of individual lives as well as becoming actively involved in the transformation of the community.

Another example of the effectiveness of building ministry partnerships with existing programs is evident in the work of the Northeast Philadelphia Interfaith Hospitality Network (or NPIHN). NPIHN calls faith communities together to serve homeless families by advocacy and providing education about homelessness. Presbyterian churches such as Germantown, Mt. Airy, and Oak Lane are involved in this work and partner with churches of varied denominations and diverse faith communities in the city of Philadelphia to address homelessness and its surrounding issues. The involved churches provide temporary housing for homeless families who are in transition to stability. In collaborating with NPIHN, area churches and faith communities benefit by providing ministry and services in a manner designed to nurture and provide stability to needy families.

## 8) Help congregations whose **ministry is at the end of its life** to transition with grace and thanksgiving

"Both churches had experienced the best of times and the worst of times, and both churches closed. One died with thanksgiving, joy, and hope. The other went to its grave conflicted and burned out." *Ending With Hope: A Resource for Closing Congregations*, Beth Ann Gade, Alban p. 91, 2002

At least 20 churches in our presbytery have closed since 1982. Congregations that are in serious decline, where the potential for revitalization is not likely, need help in acknowledging that they are dying and letting go. They need to be given permission to die. Most of the members one finds in a dying congregation are elderly, long-term members. They have strong emotional ties to their church families. They worry about: "Where will I be buried from if my church closes?" They wonder about finding a church home where they will have ties with members who will care about them like the church family that they are afraid of losing. These are people who have already experienced significant loss. They have buried parents, spouses, siblings, good friends, and some, even children. They never expected to lose their church. That feels like losing God to them. If they have to close their church it also feels like they have let God down. For them, their church building is Zion, holy ground.

The church does a good job of giving pastoral care to bereaved persons. We have not done such a good job in giving pastoral care to dying congregations. Compassionate leaders are needed to help apparently terminal congregations face 'retirement'. A team trained to help

dying congregations face 'retirement' can greatly enhance the possibility that the members of the dying congregation will end their ministry at that site with hope and faith intact. The leadership must not allow itself to be scared off or side tracked by those who are in denial or want to engage in wishful thinking about their congregation's future. Leaders must stay focused and self-differentiated. Leaders need to be able to be the non-anxious presence in the midst of profound anxiousness.

For the past two years the session of Reeve Memorial in West Philadelphia has been intentional about getting its congregation to look its present state of health. The current active membership is less than sixty. More than half of the members are over 70 years of age. The members display little energy for ministry. Their financial resources are nearly depleted. In spite of their current reality, the suggestion, that maybe it was time to think about 'retiring'; was met with denial and anger directed at the messengers. Over the past two years the sustained effort of the Reeve leadership has paid off. The membership, for the most part, appears to have come to terms with its likely demise. We have seen denial, anger, depression, and acceptance displayed among the members. We cannot stop the pain but we can sit with the members on the mourner's bench, listen to them express their pain, answer their questions, and seek to comfort them as they grieve, encourage them to join another congregation, and try to assure them that God has not abandoned them.

### **C. Create organizational structures and relationships that are non-traditional to enable the Presbytery to accomplish urban ministry objectives**

(Rev. 21)

#### **1) Create a flexible, skilled, proactive and multi-disciplinary **Urban Ministry Coordinating Team** that can draw in expertise from other committees as needed for specific situations**

Just as a coordinating cabinet or trauma team pulls in other disciplines and develops tailored plans for each situation, so should the Urban Ministry Coordinating Team. While all facets of the Presbytery should be involved in implementing pieces of the Urban Ministry Strategy, the Urban Ministry Coordinating Team could be the vehicle for overall coordination, goal setting and accountability.

#### **2) Embrace selected **non-Presbyterian urban/congregational partnerships****

Several years ago, Rev. William Gaffney, now pastor of New Covenant Presbyterian Church, was leading a growing and active urban non-denominational community ministry. Working in partnership with Rev. Mark Auxter and the Mt. Airy Presbyterian Church, Rev. Gaffney became a candidate for ordination in the PCUSA and enrolled in Princeton Seminary. Over time, with the support of Mt. Airy Presbyterian Church, the non-denominational ministry grew and became part of the New Covenant Presbyterian Church bringing new life and vision for both the community ministry and the existing New Covenant Congregation.

Similarly, the UMTF recommends that the Presbytery locate other non-congregational ministry sites and assess their potential to form a Presbyterian congregation. In addition, identify local independent church ministries who are proving themselves in fruitful urban ministry. Ironically, there are now several worshipping in existing or closed Presbyterian churches. The UMTF plan would be used as a guide of measuring the ministry sites and local church's strengths for urban

ministry. Subsequently, a dialogue could begin with said congregation in considering joining the Presbyterian Church.

### 3) Develop **new non-traditional and community ministries**

What is the church? What is ministry? Does it need to be limited to a specific sanctuary or approach? Does it need a full time pastor? Does it need to be self supporting? Or can transformational ministry be none of the above? Jesus moved from place to place, reaching out and creating new disciples. Let us start with the basics, Jesus and creating disciples, and be open and creative from there regarding what else is needed for success.

The Broad Street Ministry is a new and exciting program that hopes to re-establish a prominent presence for the PCUSA and the Presbytery of Philadelphia on center city's vibrant Avenue of the Arts. Using the Chambers-Wylie Memorial Presbyterian Church space for innovative worship, hospitality and programs, it is shaped by the contribution of artists in the community, who want to integrate the tenets of their faith with their vocational life. The mission is to become a community that worships the living God with creativity, extends hospitality with intentionality, and works for justice tirelessly. This is not a traditional church or congregation but does provide a model for a new approach to undertaking urban ministry.

### 4) Actively pursue the formation of a 501(c) 3 **non-profit corporation for urban ministry**, including the community ministries.

A variety of funding vehicles for urban ministry is vital. As referenced in the Community Ministry Task Force report, we need to seriously explore the development of a Presbytery-wide 501(c)(3) umbrella corporation or foundation like Catholic Charities or Lutheran Social Services to support the work of existing and future non-profit community ministries. This nonprofit corporation would function independently from the traditional religious portion of our urban ministries. In addition, we need to encourage our local churches to consider forming their own non-profit community ministries, and assist them in this endeavor. The assistance could include: grant writing and training, program and board development, maintaining a foundation database, and additional professional assistance tailored to creating and managing a 501(c) (3).

### 5) Utilize more **demographic trend data and community need assessments** to determine priority locations for urban ministry efforts.

The New Church Development Committee's power point presentation includes a process of identifying prime ministry locations. Existing approaches to urban ministry have focused on sites and communities where we already have churches in need of development. Yet, the NCD committee uses a variety of demographic resources to determine population trends and areas that might be prime for new ministries. New locations in addition to existing locations should be considered for priority urban ministry locations. In addition to providing a theological rationale for new church development, and assessing demographic data and assessing community needs, the NCD process includes: praying constantly, talking to sessions and NCD, consulting with the presbytery, forming a task force to create mission and vision statements, exploring funding with synod and General Assembly, forming a Pastoral Nominating Committee, and call an Organizing Pastor or Pastors. Again, this is the type of comprehensive model that needs to be used for urban ministry priorities.

### 6) Create an **Urban Ministry Innovation Fund** using sale proceeds from existing properties as a primary source of funding.

As the need for finances and resources for the religious portion of our urban ministry continues, coupled with the demand for new and existing urban ministries, an urban ministry innovation fund should be developed. One primary source to be considered for capitalizing this fund is the proceeds from the sale of existing churches and properties. The fund would be designated for use in revitalizing existing urban ministries, creating new and innovative urban ministries, and encouraging development of urban leadership through education and training.

An example of this concept is best exemplified in the Urban Property Policy developed by the Presbytery of New Brunswick (New Jersey). This policy mandates that 70% of the net proceeds from the sale of urban Presbyterian church buildings and properties within the city limits of the New Brunswick and Trenton areas, be invested back into these urban areas to be used for urban church development, church redevelopment, evangelism and mission outreach. Fifteen percent of the proceeds are used for continuing education in further equipping leaders serving in urban congregations.

The Presbytery of Charlotte also has a fund for church development generated from sale proceeds.

7) By 2008, finalize plans to create a **new church development**, including a new building, in one of the 10 areas of greatest need.

Our Presbytery needs visible evidence of vitality within Philadelphia. As a result, there is a need to locate and plant new church construction within the city proper. The UMTF suggest a strategy of selling some of our dinosaurs—those older buildings that are bleeding the Presbytery's resources, and invest the sale proceeds in new construction. The site would emerge out of the UMTF's plan of identifying prime ministry locations. The Presbytery could build the churches with existing congregations, merging congregation, and/or new church developments.

## V. Recommendations

- 1) That the General Council call for a **Presbytery wide season of prayer, study and fasting focused on urban ministry** and its priority within the Presbytery.
- 2) That opportunities be created for all people from around the presbytery to **come together to dialogue, share, question, challenge, understand, fellowship, react** and even create their own recommendations for urban ministry during the period of study, prayer and dialogue;

*That following the specified period of study, reflection and prayer, the following four additional recommendations be introduced by the current chair or a member of the Urban Ministry Task Force for a vote on the floor of presbytery with the understanding that new insights and changes may be recommended as amendments from the floor at that time as an outgrowth of the period of presbytery-wide study, reflection and prayer.....*

- 3) That by the year 2008, the congregations of our presbytery, working cooperatively with one another, will have developed **no less than five vibrant**

**missional urban ministry hubs** to reach those in need, those who are lost and to make new disciples in communities of greatest need within our presbytery. Because these ministries may take a wide variety of forms, and may or may not all be congregations, our skills, structure, support and mindset will be reformed and always reforming to adapt to the variety.

- 4) That a **Multi-Disciplinary Urban Ministry Coordinating Team (UMCT)** **be created** to set overall urban ministry priorities, oversee coordination of urban ministry activities among various Presbytery committees and to hold our Presbytery and its members accountable for the accomplishment of agreed upon urban ministry objectives.
  - a. UMCT shall **coordinate with and include representation from other Presbytery committees**, academic leadership with expertise in urban ministry and a cross section of representatives from churches throughout the Presbytery.
  - b. UMCT will seize upon **kairos moments** and build upon trends and strengths in ministries and communities.
  - c. UMCT will **annually partner with 3-5 ministries** where it is evident that the potential for making new disciples, vibrancy and growth in ministry exists.
  - d. UMCT will **insure adequate leadership** for these ministries via the recruitment of new pastors, training of lay leaders, creation of innovative partnerships and resource teams, and the use of specialized ministry consultants.
  
- 5) That UMCT, in conjunction with the Mission Commitment Committee, the Presbytery trustees, and the General Council make **funding for this urban ministry strategy a top priority and actively pursue no less than \$1,500,000 for this endeavor over the next three years** by reallocating existing funds and identifying major new funding sources. A detailed budget and funding plan will be developed by these parties. A preliminary budget is included as Attachment 4. As part of this process, the following avenues for funding will be given serious and active consideration:
  - a. Creation of a **501 (c)(3) nonprofit community development corporation (CDC)** for urban ministry.
  - b. Development of **grant writing expertise** within the Presbytery.
  - c. Designing a **major funding initiative for urban ministry** and submit it for funding through a major foundation such as The Lilly Endowment.
  - d. Creation of an **Urban Ministry Innovation Fund** by setting aside no less than 75% of the funds from the **sale of existing Presbytery properties**.

- e. Identifying and pursuing block grants and other government and municipal funding sources, including **Faith Based Initiatives**.
  - f. Undertaking a **Presbytery-wide special giving campaign**.
  - g. Pursuing **Synod and GA funding** to support urban ministry initiatives.
- 6) That the Committees of the Presbytery will all work with the UMCT and one another to insure that **new skills, resources and Presbytery-wide support be made available to all of the churches of the Presbytery engaged in urban ministry**, not just the hubs targeted for special attention.

**Attachment 1**  
Theological Premise  
SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL FOR GOD

***Vocation / Our Calling: God's Stewards***

*<sup>10</sup> Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. <sup>11</sup> Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. (1Pet. 4:10)*

Any plan of action we present to our presbytery needs to find its mandate, i.e. its center, in the Biblical witness. How has the Bible informed us in our development of a plan for ministry? God's purpose in establishing "a people" [the church] in the midst of the world is evidently to benefit "all the families of the earth" through a community being reconciled to God's self and to each other. The biblical symbol of the steward is found throughout the scriptures beginning with the book of Genesis. The position of steward as developed in the Hebrew scripture can be likened to the position of an executive assistant to a CEO. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the steward is portrayed as a servant, but not just an ordinary servant of his master. The steward does not just take orders and do the bidding of others. The steward is a servant that is given great responsibility. The steward must make managerial decisions, give orders, and take charge. The steward is the one who has been given the responsibility for the management and service of that which belongs to another. The steward in the Old Testament was usually accountable to a king or ruler. However, the patriarchs utilized stewards as well. The steward is clearly ultimately accountable to another.

In the New Testament, the parables speak of the conduct of the steward as servant-manager of the master who is not an earthly person but rather Jesus Christ. The servant/stewards are Christ's true followers. We are called to be stewards of Jesus Christ. The church is a stewarding community. As those *in Christ*, Christian disciples are being taken up into the work of Christ the Great Steward. There is an implied polemic in the New Testament against viewing the church as an end-in-itself. The *koinonia*, i.e. The Body of Christ, exists for a purpose greater than itself. The church is called to serve the God of grace; it is to participate in the extension of that grace throughout the world. The steward exists not only to serve her/his master, but also to serve those whose interests the master has at heart. Jesus Christ is presented in the New Testament not in the role of owner or master but as the authentic steward. "*I must be about my father's business.*" (Luke 2:49) Jesus lives in such obedience to his vocation as steward, that he becomes both the medium

through whom these gifts are distributed to others and the primary model for our stewardship. It is through the prior stewardship of Jesus into which through the Spirit and faith we are initiated.

We most often use the word *stewardship* in our churches when talking about church affairs or church business. However, our normative use of the word gives the term a very limited and anti-holistic connotation. The term stewardship has become for us the code word for talking about money in the church. It has been relegated to a functional metaphor. Stewardship is viewed as a means to an end. Stewardship is something we do in order to get on with the real work of the church to wit: its mission. We give lip service to the notion that stewardship includes the use of our time and talents. However, when the average person in the pew hears the word stewardship, the image of the annual pledge card and the church operating budget is most likely to come to mind.

Part of our task is the elevation and enlarging of the biblical symbol of the steward to give it more breadth and depth and christological meaning in the life of the average person that sits in the pew on Sunday morning. We are calling for stewardship to be understood as a holistic image of human and Christian obedience. It puts in a word, so to speak, a rather complex but profoundly consistent understanding of the identity and genius, of the human creature when he/she is being true to God's intention for them, true to their essential nature to wit: Made in the image of God. Stewardship is a way of being and not a function. Stewardship is who you are. So stewardship must be understood first as descriptive for the life lived in obedience to the will of God. Deeds of stewardship arise out of being an authentic steward. Stewardship can be understood as a collective term that describes the whole posture of what it means to be a Christian. Its basis in reality is not a sentiment but an event: "Jesus Christ and him crucified." (1 Cor 2:2) It is into this event that we are baptized—into his stewardship that we are being incorporated.

The *law* of stewardship says that human beings must be good trustees of God's entire creation. However, it is one thing to know this and another to do it. The *gospel* of stewardship begins by overcoming that which is within us that prevents us from being good stewards i.e. the pride of imagining ourselves owners; the sloth of irresponsibility and neglect, fear of failure and reprisals, fear of imagining an alternative reality congruent with the Biblical image which is antithetical to the reality proposed by the dominate culture. The gospel of stewardship gives us the grace that we need to exercise a love for the world that is larger than our selfishness or what the NIV calls our "sinful nature". It is the gospel of stewardship that gives us the resolve and strength to overcome our anxiety and inertia to move beyond our comfort zones and live into our Biblically articulated destiny. "*For I know the plans I have for you,*" declares the LORD, "*plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans*

*to give you hope and a future.*" (Jer 29: 11) The Christian view of stewardship starts with the stewardship of the One *who did not grasp at equality with God, but was obedient* (Phil.2). We participate as those who are brought through the Spirit, through hearing, and through baptism into identity with Him in His stewardship.

One could wish that the New Testament writers had developed more fully the worldly meaning of the insight of the Church of Christ as steward: how it applied to the Christian community's daily life in the world; how it conditioned our dealing as Christians with institutions like government and economic structures; how it leads to an ethic of social responsibility; and what it means for our relation to the non-human world for the management of nature, etc. However, the schematic of the Jesus' we meet in the scriptures is detailed enough to points us to a call to participate in Christ's reconciling work via a theology of empathy.

### **Present Your Bodies As Living Sacrifices**

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God--what is good and acceptable and perfect.(Romans 12:1-2)*

To sacrifice something in the Judeo-Christian context means essentially to be set apart for God. The sacrifice becomes God's property. The faithful steward presents his/her whole self daily to God to be used for the purposes of God. The sacrifice is the body in its wholeness. Here Paul would mean the whole self mind, body, spirit. The Greek word *soma* [body] denotes not just the person, but the person in his or her corporeality—in his or her concrete relationship within this world. It is in the physical finiteness of the body that a person can experience the world and relate to others. Daily living equals a constant dedication; a whole person commitment lived out in daily existence. The steward must be able to remain self-differentiated and clear about his/her self-identity as Jesus' steward vis à vis the dominate culture as he /she interacts with the dominate culture.

Paul's use of the language of sacrifice would have evoked the people to recall their understanding of the cultic ritual of "sacrifice" which becomes the metaphor for articulating the way the follower of Christ [the steward] is to live and behave in daily ordinary life to fulfill the office of steward. The people understood that a sacrifice was something that was given to God. Paul is saying if one truly wants to worship God authentically then, your whole life—entire life—becomes your sacrifice, your daily offering to God. Worship is expressed in the bodily reality of every day living in a manner that is obedient as one of Christ stewards. That equals stewardship. If it is our "*spiritual worship*" [*liturgia* the work of the people] it is the highest offering we can give the Master. It is the best most reverential sacrifice we have to offer.

Eugene Peterson in his well received paraphrase of our scriptures [*The Message*] is very helpful in assisting us in our understanding of Paul's message in Romans 12: 1–2 :

*So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.*

*Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. Romans 12 : 1–2 (MsgB)*

### **Our Mission: Ambassadors of Reconciliation**

*<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: <sup>19</sup> that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 2 Cor. 5:17–20*

To *reconcile*: in its simplest connotation, the verb denotes the action by which personal enemies achieve peace. It is the work of a mediator to make hostility cease in order to lead to peace. How the message of reconciliation is communicated should depend on the context, particularly that of the targeted receiver. As stewards charged with the message of reconciliation in the Philadelphia Presbytery, we propose that the appropriate medium of mediation in our current context should be deeds of compassion, the description of which are limited only by one's imagination, creativity, vision and call of the Spirit. We must "walk the walk" and not just "talk the talk". "*Preach the gospel always and if necessary use words.*" [St. Francis of Assisi ] "*I'd rather see a sermon than hear one day.*" [Edgar Case] We must enter into the practice of a "*theology of empathy*"

God has reconciled the world in Christ; but the task of engaging in the ministry of reconciliation must be carried on by Christ's ambassadors [stewards] and, it must be applied to concrete human situations. The gospel exists for the world not the world for the gospel! The object of the whole enterprise is that the will of the Lord should be performed in the habitat of those whom he himself befriended; i.e. that the

hungry should be fed, the sick healed, the imprisoned liberated, the proud humbled, the self-righteous made to know their need for forgiveness, and the broken community of humankind reconciled with itself and its God. Our personal stewardship is a participation in the stewardship of a community, the church, which as we have seen is in turn a participation in the work of the chief steward, Jesus.

In Acts 2:44ff we learn that the earliest Christians "had all things in common." The Christians had to take direct responsibility for their own life and work. Part of their individual stewardship was this cooperative pooling of resources. They had to bear one another's burdens. They practiced a theology of empathy. Stewardship in its fullness, depends upon a sense of immediate responsibility for the welfare for the 'the least of these' on the part of the individual Christian and of the whole body of Christ. The Christian message is meant to bring a better life to people here and now and such a mission cannot be met without funds and without personnel i.e. faithful stewards.

This statement relies heavily on the vision of Douglas John Hall's reflections on the use that can be made of the Biblical symbol of the steward as he explains it in his book *The Steward*.

**Attachment 2**  
**Task Force Process and Membership**

Members were appointed by Bob Kenworthy, Chair of the 2004 General Council of the Philadelphia Presbytery. The membership was intentionally limited to a small working group who could study together and share ideas from those in the forefront of urban ministry in Philadelphia and beyond.

Members....

Rev. William Gaffney– Chair; Pastor of New Covenant Presbyterian Church; currently in a D. Min program focusing on Urban Ministry at New Brunswick Seminary; past tentmaker pastor; developing a 501©3 at New Covenant; chair of Black Clergy Group Philadelphia Presbytery; Vice–Moderator of the Black Caucus, Philadelphia Presbytery; member of the Planning Committee.

David Heaton– Member of Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church and active in the Urban/Suburban Partnership ministry with First African Presbyterian Church; Director of The Other Carpenter, a 501©3 community based home improvement ministry that involves local residents, community associations, W. Philly and suburban churches; past–Director of 18<sup>th</sup> Street Development Corporation in So. Philadelphia; has led and attended several educational programs that encourage putting faith into action for life changing transformational ministries.

Elder Martha Drusedum – Member of First Presbyterian Church of Germantown; Board member of NW Interfaith Hospitality Network; Chair of the Outreach and Mission Committee for First Germantown; recently went to Boston to participate in a week long community organizing training session.

Rev. Dr. Katie Day– Professor of Urban Ministry, Lutheran Theological Seminary; active in several national Urban Ministry networks; member of Philadelphia Interfaith Action (PIA, faith based community organizing group); author focused on trends in urban and transformational ministry.

Rev. Alonzo Johnson– Pastor of Oak Lane Presbyterian Church; past experience leading non–traditional urban ministry efforts in Louisville and with the GA; recently featured in Presbyterians Today as “a young leader of the denomination”.

Elder Glenda Hodges – Candidate for Minister of the Word and Sacrament currently under the care of our presbytery. She has been certified ready to receive a call. She is an avid reader of literature regarding new directions for urban ministry; member of Reeve Memorial Presbyterian Church in West Philadelphia; active participant in the West Philadelphia Working Group exploring new approaches to collaborative ministry.

Rev. Patrice Nelson– Staff to the Task Force. Interim Associate Exec. for Mission Partnerships and Urban Ministry. Past Associate Pastor for Urban/Suburban Ministries at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church; past Interim of Reeve Memorial Presbyterian Church in West Philadelphia; extensive past work experience in regional and community development; Master’s Degree in Urban Planning as well as M. Div. Focused on Urban Ministry.

### **Attachment 3**

#### **Current Realities of the Philadelphia Presbytery From the Perspective of the Urban Ministry Task Force**

##### **A. *Our congregations are not seen as vital, energized and prophetic agents of transformation in the city***

- The members of our urban congregations often do not feel *Spirit-filled* and energized. Instead, they feel worn out, overburdened, and alone.
- Our worship services are often not *Spirit-filled* and energized but are instead “the best we could do” with a few choir members, piecemeal programs and insufficient leadership.
- We are not alone. Other denominations are experiencing declining membership and low resources. It’s often the new, large, “shiny” churches that attract the crowds and survive.
- Our sanctuaries don’t look hopeful and welcoming. Instead, many of them look broken down, dark and like they are about to close.
- We overlook the possibility vitality that might come from developing new churches with new building construction in the inner city.
- We lack a public and respected social voice in the Philadelphia area.

##### **B. *The urban context around our churches has changed and feels foreign to many in our existing congregations.***

- The harsh realities of the communities outside the doors of our churches necessitate that we give our absolute best to attract new disciples
- The members of our congregations are welcoming to those who come inside the doors but often ignore those who are walking up and down the streets. There is a “them and us” mentality.
- Our ministries have lost touch with the needs of the communities and hence are not necessary and integral. If our churches closed, many in the community would not notice or care.
- Congregation members develop ministries and programs to meet their own needs and don’t have a good handle on the needs of those around them.
- There is little dialogue, joint planning or sharing of leadership between those inside the churches and those outside the churches.

##### **C. *Existing members need care too.***

- Existing members are so busy trying to maintain the church and the congregations that there is little energy or time to be God’s agents in the midst of a hurting world.
- Many of our members are older and in need of good pastoral care.
- While our urban congregations struggle to meet the needs of those outside the doors, for the most part, they continue to be vital and supportive spiritual

communities for those who are already inside.

D. ***The Presbytery does not work together to provide adequate resources of time, talent and treasure to nurture and sustain vital transformative urban congregations.***

- We do not have adequate leadership or training in our congregations to equip and send out disciples.
- Members of small congregations are working hard to achieve core values but too often they are going it alone.
- Existing struggling congregations complain about lack of resources but are often too scared, proud or distrustful hence unwilling to partner with other churches or the Presbytery who can help.
- We tolerate an attitude of classism between struggling and self-sufficient congregations.
- We operate more structural than relational.
- We resist supporting a creative “property sale proceeds” initiative designated to urban ministry strategies.
- We lack a real commitment to share gifts, talents, and time with congregations pursuing self-sufficiency (ie, partnering with congregations forming and developing non-profit organizations, real estate investments, and other creative enterprises.)
- We embrace a secular and corporate ideology of stewardship regarding our finances. We use the phrase, “since God calls us to be good stewards” as a code phrase to justify storing up and safeguarding finances over and above seeking ways to resource with intention.
- We remain reluctant to challenge dying churches to close or merge.

**Attachment 4**

**Preliminary Budget for Three Year Period**

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Amount:</b>
<b>1 &amp;2</b>	Season Prayer, Study and Fasting Yr. 1	\$2,500.00
<b>3</b>	Identification of Priorities ( Ongoing)	\$2,500.00
<b>4.</b>	Development of 3-5 Priorities per year including training, leadership recruitment, program development, facility enhancement, publicity, consulting and other ministry needs. \$250,000 per year for 3 years.	\$750,000.00
<b>5.</b>	Creation of CDC/501(c)3 Executive Director First 2 yrs. \$70,000 per yr. Administrative Assistant First 2 yrs. At \$35,000 per yr. Funds Development and Grant writing initiatives	\$10,000.00 \$140,000.00 \$70,000.00 \$50,000.00
<b>6.</b>	Fund for Urban Mission Initiatives beyond 3-5 targeted ministries Leadership Recruitment and Development Seminary Without Walls (including community organizing training, collaborative development, creation of innovative ministries and other	\$250,000.00  \$100,000.00  \$150,000.00

	initiatives described in Section IV pages 10–16. Enhancement of Community Ministries	\$250,000
	<b>Preliminary Total:</b>	<b>\$1,775,000</b>