

A Call To Faithful Witness

Approved By The 39th General Assembly
Of The Presbyterian Church In America
June 10, 2011

Whereas; the Church is called to take the gospel to all peoples, including those who have historically been resistant to the gospel;

Whereas; contextualizing the language and forms of the gospel, while remaining faithful to the truths of Scripture, is good and necessary for the advancement of the gospel;

Whereas; the Church must exercise wisdom in discerning appropriate expressions of contextualization, reserving its public corrections for genuine and substantive threats to the gospel;

Whereas; in recent initiatives known as “Insider Movements”, some groups have produced Bible translations that have replaced references to Jesus as “Son” (*huios*) with terms such as “Messiah” in order to be more acceptable to Muslims;

Whereas; some Bible translations of Insider Movements have replaced references to God as “Father” (*pater*) with terms such as “Guardian” and “Lord”;

Whereas; these Bible translations are harmful to the doctrines of the authority of Scripture and the deity of Christ, bringing confusion to people in need of Christ—concerns that are held by many national leaders and Bible societies;

Whereas; some PCA churches have knowingly or unknowingly financially supported these Bible translations;

Whereas; Muslims should not be denied a full and faithful witness;

Therefore be it resolved that the 39th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America:

- Affirms that biblical motivations of all those who seek to share the good news of Jesus Christ with those who have never heard or responded to the gospel should be encouraged;
- Repents of complacency or comfort that keep us from a faithful witness;
- Declares as unfaithful to God’s revealed Word, Insider Movement or any other translations of the Bible that remove from the text references to God as “Father” (*pater*) or Jesus as “Son” (*huios*), because such removals compromise doctrines of the Trinity, the person and work of Jesus Christ, and Scripture;
- Encourages PCA congregations to assess whether the missionaries and agencies they support use or promote Bible translations that remove familial language in reference to persons of the Trinity, and if so, to pursue correction, and failing that, to withdraw their support;
- Encourages PCA congregations to support biblically sound and appropriately contextualized efforts to see Christ’s Church established among resistant peoples;

- 1 • Calls PCA churches and agencies to collaborate with each other and the broader Church
2 to discern and implement biblical authority in gospel contextualization.
- 3 • Authorizes the Moderator, as an aid to greater gospel faithfulness throughout the PCA
4 and the broader Church, to appoint a study committee to report to the 40th General
5 Assembly concerning Insider Movements, including but not limited to:
 - 6 ○ A summary and biblical assessment of Insider Movements' history, philosophies,
7 and practices;
 - 8 ○ A biblical response to interpretations of Scripture used in defense of Insider
9 Movements;
 - 10 ○ An examination of the theological impact of removing familial language for the
11 Trinity from Bible translations;
 - 12 ○ An assessment of PCA missions partners regarding the influence of Insider
13 Movement within them, including assessment of their theology of religion,
14 ecclesiology, Scripture, and relationship to the Emergent Church;
 - 15 ○ An explanation of the relevance and importance of this issue for the PCA;
 - 16 ○ Suggestions for identifying and assessing the influence of Insider Movements
17 among mission agencies, missionaries and organizations;
 - 18 ○ Recommended resources for faithfully training and equipping congregations to
19 reach Muslims locally and internationally.
- 20 • Set the budget for the study committee at \$15,000/year and that funds be derived from
21 gifts to the AC designated for that purpose.

22
23
24

25 Rationale:

26
27
28
29
30

The Committee is convinced this critical issue for the global church strikes at the vitals of religion. However, the lack of sufficient analytical, biblical, and theological resources from a Reformed perspective, compels us to ask for a study committee to produce a cogent report for our churches.