

Report of the Mission and Social Justice Division August 30, 2018

Mission and Social Justice began the year with strong promotion of the Poor People's Campaign and an overture to the presbytery and then to General Assembly regarding democracy in Madagascar. We have continued by partnering with the Mainstream Coalition of Kansas to bring its Voter2Voter initiative to the presbytery. We are also sponsoring an overture to ask for the presbytery's endorsement of Proposition B on the Missouri ballot.

In the first part of the year, our focus was on a national initiative sponsored by hundreds of clergy, including the then-co-moderators of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and our denomination's stated clerk. The new Poor People's Campaign stands within the historical legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. and his original Poor People's Campaign in 1968. It is a way of organizing and consolidating the work of grassroots organizations around the United States—all of them working in their ways to address the systemic causes of poverty. MSJ provided some funding to StandUpKC, the group organizing our local efforts toward this cause. We also sponsored an overture to presbytery asking for the presbytery's full endorsement of the PPC, and helped recruit Presbyterians to the movement.

In the second part of the year, our focus has turned to the upcoming midterm elections and voting. We are approaching this issue in a non-partisan way, recognizing that our society is better when all people of every view have a voice and exercise their civic rights and responsibilities. Our theological forebear, John Calvin, saw civic engagement as a way to bring the values of the church to the world. We believe this happens more when more Presbyterians are involved.

Toward that end, MSJ is sponsoring four regional events (and one lunchtime event at the September 15th presbytery meeting) to recruit ambassadors for Voter2Voter. Essentially, the idea is that individual people are trained to become voting ambassadors--and they then pledge to find ten people (especially if they are people who might not otherwise be likely to vote) who they can then encourage, facilitate, and cajole to the polls in November.

Because the project is non-partisan, and because it relies on individual relationship-building, Voter2Voter is ideal for churches. It's a kind of civic evangelism, if you will.

Our four regional events will be at First Presbyterian St. Joseph, MO on September 8th, at Chapel Hill and First Presbyterian Leavenworth on September 22nd, and at Westport on September 29th. Each of the events will be on a Saturday morning from 9am-11am.

The final part of our report regards Proposition B. This proposition on the Missouri ballot in the upcoming November elections proposes raising the minimum wage in Missouri, and fits in with our Scriptural values to pay workers a fair wage and ensure that all people have the ability to support themselves and their families. The proposition has already been endorsed by a number of faith organizations, including Metropolitan Congregations United and Missouri Faith Voices.

Thank you for reading, and please contact with me any questions, joys, or concerns you have.

Grace and Peace,
Steven Andrews
MSJ Moderator