



“...in our time...”

| 01.12.2015

A statement on relations between the Presbytery of Chicago and the Jewish community in metropolitan Chicago. Proposed to the Presbytery of Chicago November 21, 2015

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a theological and relational framework for the Presbytery of Chicago to pursue an engaged and constructive relationship with the Jewish community in metropolitan Chicago (city of Chicago and suburbs).

Rationale

As Christians, Presbyterians are ever aware that our theological convictions inform and guide our attitudes and practices, just as the practices of our faith embody our beliefs and convictions. We place a high value on theological understanding as reflected in our Book of Confessions, standards for ordination to church office, Christian education, and in our discourse, deliberations and actions as a corporate body.

Therefore, in light of historic circumstances and current realities that the Jewish community has endured and continues to face, we seek to renew our theology and practices with fresh insights of God's Word to us in Jesus Christ as witnessed by Holy Scripture interpreted in the power of the Spirit.

Process

This document, presented to the Presbytery Assembly by the Ecumenical and Interreligious Work Group, has been vetted for review and comment by: Christian and Jewish scholars; members, congregations and other groups within Chicago Presbytery; and similar counterparts in other presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

A draft of the document received a 'first reading' by the Presbytery Assembly at its June 16, 2015 meeting.

Motion: The Presbytery of Chicago adopt the “...in our time...”A statement on relations between the Presbytery of Chicago and the Jewish community in metropolitan Chicago, for the following purposes:

- To serve as a statement on the relationship of Chicago Presbytery with the Jewish community in metropolitan Chicago;
- To serve as affirmation to the Jewish community of our spiritual kinship with them, and a commitment to an active and deepening relationship;
- To serve as a source of study, guidance and inspiration for local congregations and for the Presbytery as a whole in their dialogue and engagement with the Jewish community in metropolitan Chicago.

I Preface

During a time of much needed renewal, as deep disagreement and polarizing discourse over the

ongoing Israeli - Palestinian conflict has led to fractured relations between Presbyterians within the denomination, and between the denomination and the Jewish community across their local and national expressions, we seek to reconsider our theology and practices. In light of historic circumstances and fresh insights of how the God we know in Jesus Christ is at work among us, we cannot consider our relationship with the Jewish community in the US without taking this reality into account.

Further, it must be clearly stated that the affirmation of our spiritual kinship with the Jewish community is not dependent upon a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, nor does it presume to offer a specific path to its resolution. Rather, it seeks to provide a framework by which Jews and Presbyterians can discuss the conflict in an engaged, civil, and productive way.

This document is primarily addressed to Presbyterians, in the Presbytery of Chicago, for the purpose of framing and guiding individual and corporate discourse, dialogue, relations and action with respect to the Jewish community in metropolitan Chicago. We recognize the pluralistic reality and diversity of the members of the body of the PC(USA), the Presbytery of Chicago, and the individual congregations therein.

As this document addresses the relationship of Presbyterians to the Jewish people in metropolitan Chicago, and as such will be 'overheard' by the Jewish community, we strive to understand the Jewish community as they understand themselves, and to be clear about our commitment to the wellbeing and aspirations of the Jewish people. We recognize the pluralistic reality and diversity of the Jewish people in metropolitan Chicago, in the United States, and around the world.

Any credible document that addresses the relationship of Presbyterians to the Jewish people must take into account the Israeli - Palestinian conflict, and as such will be 'overheard' by the Palestinian community in metropolitan Chicago. For that reason, we also strive to be clear about our commitment to the wellbeing and aspirations of the Palestinian people.

It is the hope of the Ecumenical and Interreligious Work Group that this document might be a resource to other presbyteries and the Presbyterian Church (USA) in their broader relations with the Jewish community in the US.

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