

Report of the United Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship to the
193rd General Assembly, Houston, 1981

I. Statement of Purpose. Following the lead of a daily prayer discipline we have discovered among tribal Presbyterians in Burma, the purpose of the United Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship has been to develop a faithful, devoted and knowledgeable constituency within the UPCUSA in support of efforts to establish an indigenous, corporate witness within the remaining 16,000 plus people groups which at our founding still awaited that special grace.

THE NATURE OF THE FRONTIERS

Such groups constitute the "frontiers" to which our name refers. The number of individuals included by "frontier" people groups was slightly over half the world's population at our founding. As defined by a world-level consultation in 1980, those who are part of such groups cannot be reached by the normal evangelistic outreach of existing congregations within their linguistic, cultural or sociological spheres, since it is the absence of such congregations within a people group which designates and defines the frontiers of which we speak. Western missionaries are not the only ones who can cross such frontiers, but to do so is essentially a missionary task whoever does it, and will not likely be done apart from special prayer and special efforts.

THE ROLE OF PRESENT MISSION EFFORTS

One urgent reason for special prayer and effort for frontiers is, ironically, a result of the awesomely successful missionary enterprise of the past 100 years. Almost everywhere missionaries have gone, the resulting flourishing growth of the "national" churches has come to consume all but roughly 5% of the missionary effort of all evangelical forces. The role of the United Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship is not to diminish nor divert attention from the people groups where work has earlier been established, but to open a new final era of mission funds to focus specifically upon the remaining frontiers.

THE SPECIFIC METHOD OF THE UPFF

We are touched by the meaning of the mealtime "handful of rice" Presbyterians in Burma are daily setting aside for mission outreach. We believe that even brief prayer and small sacrifice on a daily basis is the best of all methods whereby we can educate and rebuild a consciousness of the final frontiers among members of the UPCUSA. To this end we are eager to explore a daily "Loose Change" plan which is intended to function like the Burma custom. Since other groups outside the UPCUSA will shortly be appealing to UPCUSA membership for collaboration in their own version of this plan, it seems reasonable that both present and future UPCUSA involvement in outreach to Hidden People groups be presented to our membership by a Fellowship made up of UPCUSA members.

THE SPECIFIC GOALS OF THE UPFF

The United Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship seeks to attract not less than 100,000 United Presbyterians to a daily devotional discipline which will expose them, enlighten them, and educate them concerning mission frontiers. The financial dimension of this discipline is the giving of money daily--"loose change"--on an over-and-above basis to the cause of frontier missions. It may be assumed that the vast majority of this money will be channeled into our own Program Agency's frontier activities. However, in accord with general church policy, we do not

believe we should forbid designations to specific projects within a Program Agency budget for Frontiers, as here defined, nor designation to frontier mission efforts outside the Presbyterian church. But this Fellowship is intended to be primarily a drive for renewed prayer and giving to United Presbyterian causes. If the idea catches on rapidly it is not impossible that by the end of this year 2,000 churches will average 50 UPFF members, or that 20 Presbyteries will average 5,000 members. In any case, in one year, if 100,000 UPCUSA members can be challenged to set aside their loose change daily and pray and study about frontiers at the same time, this will generate at least 10 million dollars. Thus our prayer and educational goal is 100,000 of our people in a daily devotional discipline focused on frontiers, and our financial goal is 10 million dollars per year.

II. Listing of Officers and their Addresses. Daphne A. Drescher, Sec.-Treas., 1539 E. Howard St., Pasadena, CA 91104; Rev. Richard F. Lovelace, Th.D., 199 Bridge St., So. Hamilton, MA 01982; Virginia Roundy, Ph.D. (PUMA-SC), 2540 E. Orange Grove, Orange, CA 92667; Franklin E. Satterberg (UPCMS), 1603 No. Oxford, Pasadena, CA 91104; Rev. Robert C. Thorp (PUMA-NC), 1381 Bing Dr., San Jose, CA 95129; Rev. Alexander C. Wilson (UPWM), 119 Pryor, Tonawanda, NY 14150; Rev. Matthew J. Welde (PUBC), 50 Buckwalter Rd., Spring City, PA 19475; Rev. Ralph D. Winter, Ph.D. (UPOWE), 533 Hermosa, So. Pasadena, CA 91030.

III. Membership Criteria and Size. The membership of the United Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship consists of only those individuals who are members of the Board of Directors. Persons may become Associate Members of the United Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship by making an annual contribution of any amount to the organization.

IV. Programs and Activities. This particular phenomenon of daily devotion to new outreach is as old as the custom among tribal Presbyterians and other Christians in N.E. India deriving from mission efforts early in this century. The development of a "loose change" version in the United States dates back to the arrival in late 1980 of a tribal Presbyterian minister from Chin State in Western Burma doing graduate studies to enhance his role as director of the mission program of his denomination. As a result a Frontier Fellowship movement began within several church traditions almost simultaneously. The first Presbyterian church in the USA to found a Frontier Fellowship within its congregation was the Chapel Woods Presbyterian Church (PCUS) in Decatur, Georgia.

Now a daily radio broadcast, several periodicals and other means of communication lend support to this growing movement.

The specifically United Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship reflects the joyful response of UPCUSA members to this valuable and promising discipline.

V. Listing of Publications. "The Frontier Fellowship" newsletter will chronicle the growth and progress of the UPCUSA version of the larger movement.

VI. Financial Statement. The books are still in the process of being set up.

Respectfully submitted,

Daphne A. Drescher
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