

August 19, 1998

TO: Session, Webster Presbyterian Church  
FROM: Mary Lawrence, Mission Interpretation and Coordination  
RE: Preliminary Results of the Mission and Service Congregational Survey

---

This is a preliminary summary of the congregational survey on mission and service at WPC. We have received 27 surveys Sunday, August 16th. We will be having a table at the upcoming Sunday School event to give more people a chance to participate.

The survey asks some basic questions of members regarding their understanding of what the church should be doing as Christ's mission and also what the role of WPC should be in fulfilling this mission. Then, rather specific questions were asked to see what mission activities stirred people's interests, concerns and passions. Finally, we asked what gifts people were personally willing to commit and where people felt new mission opportunities should develop (in a geographic sense).

Every specific mission activity on the list was mentioned by someone. Obviously, there were several specific mission activities that members mentioned more frequently than others. These tended to center around several broad categories such as direct care and support of people, societal concerns/issues and evangelism and international mission work

Direct Care and Support of People

- \* Support of area elderly (16)
- \* Support of area youth (13)
- \* Child care/child advocacy (18) (see note)
- \* Singles ministry (6)

NOTE: In the first week, child care was not separated out and some of the people mentioning child advocacy specifically wrote comments about support for our child care program, so there most likely is some overlap.

Societal Concerns

- \* Hunger (15)
- \* Poverty (11)
- \* Illiteracy (12)
- \* Peacemaking (9)
- \* Housing Issues (9)
- \* Education (9)
- \* Health issues (8)
- \* Women's issues (6)

Other

- \* Evangelism (6)
- \* International mission work (6)

As mentioned earlier, we also asked people to prioritize the mission activities they selected. The following mission activities had at least 50% of the people indicating they were one of their top three priorities:

- |                           |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Child advocacy/child care | Hunger                  |
| Evangelism                | Singles ministry        |
| Housing issues            | Support of area elderly |

In response to where people would be interested in creating a new mission opportunity, most people saw a need for local outreach --within the church, Webster and the Clear Lake area. At the other end of the geographic scale, a number of people also saw a need for support of mission work in other parts of this country and throughout the world.

The following comments are a sampling of what people wrote regarding their understanding of mission. I am writing their comments directly as it will help give a sense of what our church feels.

**"BASED ON YOUR UNDERSTANDING, WHAT SHOULD THE CHURCH BE DOING AS CHRIST'S MISSION ON A WORLD/STATE/LOCAL LEVEL?"**

- Serve as an example of Christ in the world by caring for others and giving voice to those you are voiceless
- Food and medical attention to those less fortunate, local and international, especially children
- Helping those in need with particular emphasis on youth, elderly, and families in need
- Utilizing each member's felt calling by God to reach out to serve by coordinating, sensitizing and enabling mission at whatever level is appropriate to the person's ability
- Participating in the lives of those who need--impacting local agencies, schools, etc. with Christian love
- On a local level, continue child care at WPC
- Help improve the lives of others and spread Christianity
- Improve our child care mission
- Recognizing and preserving the sacredness of God's creation--people, environment, all things
- My understanding is that the church should work within the local area first and then in the rest of the world after that.
- Concentrate on local missions that will be the most impact and the church can best influence: child care, ICM
- Christ calls the church into a life of service to others. How we look at mission and how we "do" mission reflects on our understanding of God's grace in our lives and in the life of this church.

**"WHAT SHOULD BE THE ROLE OF WPC IN FULFILLING THIS MISSION?"**

- Support national, synod, and presbytery efforts
- Focus on local good works
- Actively participate in the lives of others
- Donating money
- Active volunteering
- WPC should serve our local community first and then reach out to the larger community of the world
- Presenting mission opportunities on an ongoing basis as they are possible within the financial and personnel limits of the congregation
- Reaching out, working with young people and helping older and ill people
- WPC members should get on boards of service agencies
- Actively seeking out opportunities within the community and within the church to meet needs
- Financial help in the form of updating the physical child care. Better paid teachers.
- Financial support, commitment--real dollars and time and energy (child care)
- Education, outreach into the surrounding community, embracing ethnic diversity.
- Add an international ministry, a neighborhood ministry and an emphasis on the 20 - 35 age group.
- We should be hearing more about missionaries and their needs
- Total dedicated involvement to generate the most impact.
- We should actively participate by finding new opportunities to serve, by equipping people with resources they need and to supporting people. WPC members can be a catalyst for change, and not just locally. We don't always know where or when or how we positively influence a situation, but we shouldn't limit ourselves into thinking it's just here.

**OTHER COMMENTS REGARDING MISSION AND SERVICE AT WPC**

- I chose WPC because of its commitment to mission and people and not fancy buildings
- I feel the church would not survive if mission was not a high priority
- Get child care to a new level of excellence and then move on to care of our elderly
- We should not be spending more on ourselves than on serving the needy
- We need to resolve the issue about child care and mission. Mission takes a commitment of time, talents, and S. If we are to continue child care, we need that commitment from this congregation. There are many unserved children in these apartments but they will continue to be unserved unless we reach out and provide opportunity for them with financial help with child care.
- Contributing small amounts to many causes makes little impact. Why not focus on a few here we can make a difference?
- We need to be educated about missions and better understand the needs.
- WPC has always had a rather strong commitment to mission and as needs increase, it is not a time to back down. We are provided with what is necessary to bring about what needs to be done--it just may require be open to looking, doing, and thinking differently about things than we have in the past.