



Upon the invitation of the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL), the Third Partners' Consultation was held from 18-20 April 2018 at Dhour Choueir Evangelical Conference Center - Lebanon. At the conclusion of the Consultation, the partners issued the following memorandum:

*For the mountains may depart
and the hills be removed,
but my steadfast love shall not depart from you,
and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,
says the Lord, who has compassion on you.*

Isaiah 54:10

The third seminar of the Synod's partners was held on

AFFIRMATIONS FROM THE THIRD CONSULTATION. April 20, 2018

In the eighth year of the war in Syria, for a third time, we have gathered in Christian community as **partners with the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon**, "Together for Reconciliation and Reconstruction." In the years that we have gathered, we have learned to listen deeply, to challenge ideologies that promote violence and demean the image of God in all people. We struggle with and resist the "principalities and powers" that visit violence and destruction upon our neighbors in Syria.

We desire to speak the truth in love, and to trust the unity of our relationship in God through Christ, made visible at his Table. We acknowledge the special difficulty and importance of this gathering, occurring as it has in the wake of an attack by the United States, United Kingdom and France on the sovereignty of Syria, an attack that further threatens possibilities for peace and deepens the difficulties suffered by its people.

We affirm our relationship, our mutual love and committed partnership

We promise to work in all of our countries for permanent peace rooted in justice; to protect those who are made vulnerable, displaced and in poverty due to the crisis; not only here in the Middle East but also in the West, where refugees face challenges of exclusion and rejection.

We support and affirm the community of relief and development, in all its expressions.

We affirm the need to be a prophetic voice in the midst of violence, each in our own context.

We affirm a need to study and discern the deeper causes of violence and crisis not only within Syria and the region, but also among other nations in the world.



We affirm the need and desire for deeper ecumenical relationship and coordination; the work of the Synod in deepening ecumenical dialogue; both for a better expression of the unity of Christ in the world and this region; and for more effective coordination of humanitarian aid and information sharing in the midst of this crisis.

We affirm the Church's role as a moderating force among all people of good will in the Middle East, its relationship and dialogue with Muslim communities, and the importance of its work toward civil society. We oppose the ideologies of extremism within all religions, and affirm the good work of the Synod and its neighbors in facilitating inter-religious dialogue and mutual understanding and respect.

We affirm the importance of a modern civil state that reflects the values of peace, justice and inclusion.

We affirm both the existential threat that faces the church in the Middle East, and the essential necessity of the Church to continue to exist and to continue the important work of witness, healing, reconstruction and rebuilding.

We commend and honor:

The ministries of the local Presbyterian Churches and their Synod as they have attended to the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of their members, their neighbors, and the refugees and internally displaced who depend upon them for sustenance, shelter and well-being. We are grateful for the breadth and range of ministries in the churches; where from early childhood to old age, children, women and men are committed to Christ's mission as they support and uphold one another, serve their neighbors, rebuild towns and cities damaged or destroyed in the conflict; and participate in nurturing reconciliation in society.

We value the ecumenical partnership and cooperation among the partners of this consultation. Even more, we honor the leadership of NESSL and its member churches in fostering ecumenical and interfaith cooperation in the communities where these churches serve and lead throughout Syria and Lebanon. Those of us who are partners from the West value and learn from we are receiving from their example. We affirm and give thanks to God for their perseverance, willingness to serve not only their own communities, but also reaching out to their neighbors in the midst of crisis. This is a fulfillment of Jesus' promise that the church is salt and light for the world.

We pledge:

To plan carefully in order to have the resources necessary to meet the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of those affected. We promise to respond to those needs as partners when called upon by NESSL in their assessment. We will strive to make our collaborative relief work more effective and sustainable and to support strategies that provide hope in the complicated global struggle that continues to unfold in Syria. We will lift our voices in the international community to stop the flow of arms that destroys lives and supports a proxy war. We will work with our partners toward a just and sustainable peace, rooted in a nonviolent political and civil solution. We will continue to study together, to deepen our understanding of the Bible and our theological traditions, renewing



them in the face of emerging experience, especially our theologies of suffering and the way of the cross. We will learn from the stories of other communities that suffer, in the region and throughout the world, and pray together for mutual healing.

We commit together

To network more intentionally in sharing stories, prayers, needs, outcomes and achievements.

To witness against all kinds of violence, to work for peace and justice in all contexts.

To interfaith dialogue in the hope of building deeper and stronger relationships.

To being a bridge that can be crossed to reconciliation.

Together as a body – one Lord, one baptism, one communion – it is our duty to bear witness to the world. The church in times of crisis gives witness to the church in comfort, and indeed to everyone. We will not be defined by the crisis, but by the Christ.

Outreach Foundation - USA

PCUSA / Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

PCUSA / Middle East Office

PCUSA / Syria Lebanon Partnership Network

Presbyterian Church of Ireland

Gustav Adolf Werk – Germany

Uniting Church in Sweden

Danmission – Denmark

World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)

Reformed Church of Hungary (RCH)

United Reformed Church of the United Kingdom (URC)

Christian Action in the Orient: ACO Fellowship

- ACO – France
- DM – Switzerland
- GZB – Netherland

Swiss Church Aid (HEKS-EPER) - Switzerland

Evangelical Church in Central Germany

Presbyterian Church of Brazil

Dhour Chweir Evangelical Conference Center- Lebanon
April 20, 2018