

PARTNERSHIP GRANT APPLICATION TO THE COUNCIL ON MISSION

PROJECT TO BE FUNDED: A one day event entitled, "Open to Dissent: A History and a Calling," to provide a forum for learning and discussion of the rich history of dissent, discussion, dialogue and debate within the Presbyterian Church.

TO THE COUNCIL ON MISSION

AMOUNT OF REQUEST: \$2,000

CONTACT PERSONS: Joan Marino
Christian Education Committee
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LIST ALL PARTNERS AND OR GROUPS INVOLVED The sessions of the Presbyterian Churches of Center Moriches, Port Jefferson, Merrick, Setauket, Smithtown, Old First (Huntington), Old South Haven and Glenwood Landing have approved partnership and Northport has pledged funds and participants.

MISSION GOAL SUPPORTED BY THIS PARTNERSHIP: This partnership project is intended to contribute significantly to lay leadership, mobilization and nurture. It also has direct relevance to global mission, since international policies of the US impose political and social constraints on the mission work of the PC(USA).

This project will educate and reacquaint our membership and leaders with the historic role of dissent and individual conscience as a mechanism for growth and discernment throughout Presbyterian history. The keynote speaker, William Chapman, author of History and Theology in the Book of Order: Blood on Every Page, will provide an historical context for understanding dissent as an important component in the process of discernment. Three seminar/workshops will then illustrate issues in the church over which there is current disagreement and dissent: war and peace; Christology and the reformed tradition; human sexuality and ordination.

As Americans, as Long Islanders, we all became victims of the terrorist attacks of 9/11. In the aftermath, we felt as one. We mourned as one. We prayed as one. We spoke with one voice. Patriotism, compassion, reason and faith blended together as Americans redefined our identity in the world. Our unity salved the wounds of a distraught people, as we struggled through the interminable period of rescue and recovery. We eagerly exchanged our liberties for security, and many of us lost the ability to disagree about important issues. The comfort of unity under fire left no room for dissent. With America now poised on the brink of a war of unforeseeable proportions, the need for putting both our faith and our patriotism to work for peace is particularly urgent. Doug Bartlett, former Mentor of Peace Studies at Warren Wilson College in Asheville NC, will speak of the politics of war and the role of dissent.

Also of critical importance to our denomination is the continued concern by some of our membership that we may not share a common theological basis. There have been numerous attempts to deal with this by our General Assemblies, including the formation of the Peace, Unity and Purity Task Force, and the distribution of the well publicized "Hope in The Lord Jesus Christ" statement and study guide. The resolution of this issue is of crucial importance to our denomination, yet most of our membership are unaware of it. Anna Case-Winters, moderator of the GA committee that originated the "Hope" paper, will speak on the issues of dissent that continue to fuel this controversy.

Our understanding of human sexuality and the continued controversy surrounding the ordination of sexual minorities has become a "lightning rod" for other theological and social issues. Implications range across the spectrum of such disparate concerns as discrimination and social justice, secular morality, and the appropriate methods for the exegesis of scripture. Thus, the PC(USA) has consistently and uniformly condemned homophobic hate crimes. Attempts to ban same sex unions in our denomination have not been successful. However, efforts to reverse the changes in ordination imposed by G6.0106b, the Chastity and Fidelity Amendment, have likewise failed. In the end, the Presbyterian Church (USA) still struggles to define what is acceptable and what is necessary when ministering to sexual minorities. The lives and calling of many faithful Presbyterians continue to be disputed. Sylvia Thorsen-Smith, co-author of an upcoming book on human sexuality, will speak on this issue of dissent in our denomination.

Following these educational presentations, there will be a period of discussion and commentary for all participants attending the event. We will unite in a worship service led by Barbara Lundblad at the conclusion of the day.

DESCRIPTION OF PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM: The membership of the partner congregations will contribute time, money and effort to organize, prepare and run the event. There are ample volunteers to make this an exciting, successful, and rewarding event for all. Old First, Huntington, has agreed to host the event, and all the speakers have agreed to participate.

Expenses and Support

\$ 2500. Honoraria (5 speakers x \$500)

\$ 1500. Travel expenses

\$ 300. Postage

\$ 250. Old First expenses (custodian, organist)

\$ 4500. TOTAL

In house-lunch available for \$5.00

Request \$2,000. from Peacemaking Funds

\$ 125. from 9 partner churches = \$1,125.

\$ 1,500. from Synod

\$4625. TOTAL

DESCRIPTION OF EVENT: The program will consist of a keynote address, three seminars/workshops, lunch and a service of worship. The keynote speaker, William Chapman, will place the topic of dissent into a historical context in the PC(USA). The seminars/workshops promise to be informative and motivating. The speakers are highly regarded contributors to the topic on which they will speak. Doug Bartlett, a noted peace advocate, will speak of the politics of war. Anna Case-Winters, moderator of the GA committee that originated the "Hope" paper, will speak on theology and Christology. Sylvia Thorsen-Smith, co-author with Marv Ellison of an upcoming book on the subject, Body and Soul: Justice-Lovers Rethink Sexuality, will speak on human sexuality. The service of worship is planned to be healing and hopeful. Barbara Lundblad, associate professor of Homiletics at Union Theological Seminary and author of several books, will deliver the sermon.

Since the main topic is the role of dissent, each seminar/workshop will include a period for discussion and comment. The organizers of the event were concerned that most attendees would be extremely interested in attending most or all of the workshops and in contributing to the discussions following them. For this reason, the seminar/workshops will be conducted sequentially, rather than simultaneously, to provide the greatest opportunity for attendees to hear and respond to each of the seminar topics. Fellowship during the lunch break will also provide the opportunity for informal discussions.

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE EVENT: We expect to provide an event for the members and leaders of the presbytery which will educate attendees in the rich history of dissent in the PC(USA), and to recognize that dissent is both normal and necessary. The unity that characterized our lives after 9/11 provides a solid basis for respectful disagreement, problem solving, growth and discernment. We also will provide an opportunity to celebrate our faith and the diversity of thought and conscience that makes up the PC(USA).

DATE OF EVENT: Saturday, May 3, 2003

WHEN, AND HOW, AND WHO WILL EVALUATE THIS PROGRAM?: We will distribute and collect questionnaires at the event. Each of the partner churches will also be responsible for submitting a summary statement from a meeting of their own attendees following the event.

WHAT OTHER WAYS (IN ADDITION TO FUNDING) MAY THE PRESBYTERY BE SUPPORTIVE OF THE PROGRAM (I.E. PUBLICITY, PERSONS, MATERIALS, COMMUNICATIONS)? It is hoped that presbytery will help publicize the event, in order to facilitate attendance by members and leaders of all congregations.

IF THIS REQUEST IS GRANTED, TO WHOM, AND UNDER WHAT NAME AND ADDRESS SHALL THE GRANT BE SENT?

SIGNATURE OF
APPLICANTS _____

DATE SUBMITTED _____

HAVE YOU APPLIED TO ANOTHER COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE?

WHERE? _____ WHEN? _____

DATE RECEIVED _____

ACTION TAKEN _____

Mission Grant Application to Synod of the Northeast

PROJECT TO BE FUNDED: A one day event entitled, “Open to Dissent: A History and a Calling”, to provide a forum focusing on the rich history of dissent, discussion, dialogue and debate within the Presbyterian Church.

1. IDENTIFICATION:

Name of originator: a group named Honoring All Voices (HAV), composed of 10 churches in the Presbytery of Long Island

Area to be served: Long Island et environs

Contact persons:

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2. WRITTEN PRESBYTERY ENDORSEMENT

a. This information is forthcoming for the following reasons:

Mission Council meets on March 4,
Presbytery Council meets on March 12

We have asked for letters of verification from each and will send them on to you

b. The proposal was reviewed by the Presbytery’s Peace, Justice and Hunger Workgroup, which voted to allocate \$2,000. of Peacemaking Funds and which will interpret the proposal for the benefit of Presbytery.

c. The Peace Justice and Hunger Workgroup will review the progress of the planning of the event and will evaluate the event at its conclusion.

3. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

Our partnership, Honoring All Voices, respectfully requests a grant of \$1500. to help in the funding of a one day event entitled “Open to Dissent: a History and a Calling”. This project is designed to educate and reacquaint our membership and leaders with the historic role of dissent and individual conscience as a mechanism for growth and discernment throughout Presbyterian history. Our keynote speaker, William Chapman, author of *History and Theology in the Book of Order: Blood on Every Page*, will provide an historical context for understanding this tradition in his address entitled “Nuanced Controversy: Dissent and Its Cousins” Three seminar/workshops will then illustrate issues in the church over which there is current disagreement and dissent: war and peace; Christology and the reformed tradition; human sexuality and ordination. A service of worship is planned at the conclusion of the day to unite congregants in prayer and meditation.

As Americans, we all became victims of the terrorist attacks of 9/11. In the aftermath, we spoke with one voice. Patriotism, compassion, reason, and faith blended together as Americans redefined our identity in the world. The comfort of unity under fire left no room for dissent. With America now poised on the brink of war of unforeseeable

proportions, the need for putting both our faith and our patriotism to work for peace is particularly urgent. Doug Bartlett, former Mentor of Peace Studies at Warren Wilson College in Asheville, NC will speak of the politics of war and the role of dissent in his seminar entitled “Non-Violence Rediscovered”.

Of critical importance to our denomination is the continued concern of some of our membership that we do not share a common theological basis for our faith. There have been numerous attempts to deal with this issue, most recently by our General Assembly’s publication of the “Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ” statement and study guide, as well as formation of the Peace Unity and Purity Task Force. The resolution of these issues is of crucial importance to our denomination, yet most of our membership are unaware of it. Anna Case-Winters, moderator of the GA committee that originated the “Hope” paper, will speak on the issues of dissent that continue to fuel this controversy.

Our understanding of human sexuality and the continued controversy surrounding the ordination of sexual minorities has become a “lightning rod” for other theological and social issues, such as discrimination and social justice, secular morality and the appropriate methods for the exegesis of scripture. The PC(USA) has uniformly condemned homophobic hate crimes. Attempts to ban same sex unions in our denomination haven not been successful. However, efforts to reverse G6.0106b, the Chastity and Fidelity Amendment, have likewise failed. In the end, the PC(USA) still struggles to define what is acceptable and what is necessary when ministering to sexual minorities. The lives and calling of many faithful Presbyterians continue to be disputed. Sylvia Thorson-Smith, author of “Reconciling the Broken Silence” and “Called Out With: Stories of Solidarity”, will speak on this issue of dissent in our denomination.

Following these educational presentations, there will be a period of discussion and commentary for all participants attending the event. At the conclusion of the day, we will unite in a worship service in which Barbara Lundblad, associate professor of preaching at Union Theological Seminary, will deliver the sermon.

Funds from ten Long Island churches, the Presbytery and the Synod would be used primarily as honoraria and travel expenses for the keynote speaker, the three seminar/workshop leaders mentioned above, and our preacher. Publicizing this event is important if we are to reach churches across Long Island or beyond. Publication of a brochure and mailing costs will require additional needed funds.

4. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a new proposal for a one-time, non-renewable grant related to peacemaking. The event will take place on May 3, 2003 at Old First Church, Huntington, from 8:30AM to 4:00PM. The keynote address will begin at 9:00AM. Seminars will be conducted sequentially, so that attendees may hear and respond to each topic. After an in-house lunch, simultaneous workshops will be led by the seminar leaders, so that attendees may explore preferred topics more thoroughly. The day will conclude with worship. Resource lists will be available for participants to use as a reference for further study.

5. PROPOSAL BENEFITS

a. We were all, as a nation, victims of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, and we understandably remain reluctant to express dissent, both out of uncertainty and out of concern for our neighbors. We are aware of the hostility that sometimes arises when diverse opinions are expressed, particularly when it is perceived as being aimed at our nation or our church. This event will provide an opportunity for participants to recognize and remember that dissent is both normal and necessary for growth and discernment, be it ecclesiastical or political. It will thereby provide an opportunity to celebrate our faith and the diversity of thought and conscience that makes up the PC(USA) and the USA.

b. The long-term benefits of this event will be a consequence of our providing a mechanism for dissenting voices to be heard. If attendees understand that dissent is normal and necessary, and feel that their own voices will be heard and respected, they will become more active in the life of the church. A diverse church, able to sustain a healthy dialogue of dissenting views, will more effectively provide a hopeful and forward-looking ministry in Christ.

6. MAINTENANCE DESCRIPTION

The following ten churches have worked together to plan this event. They include the Presbyterian churches of Center Moriches, Glenwood Landing, Levittown, Merrick, Old First Church (Huntington), Old South Haven, Northport, Port Jefferson, Setauket, and Smithtown. We have shared dinners, dialogue, prayer and planning together. We feel a newly found Christian camaraderie and renewed commitment toward working for peace and wholeness. Our work is not done, but planning this event has inspired us to look ahead to other events we might sponsor together which focus on justice and peace.

Our Presbytery’s Peace Justice and Hunger Workgroup has always been committed to doing Christ’s work. They have been very supportive of our vision and have joined in the leadership of this event. They will continue to work with HAV and oversee our proposed projects or events in the future.

7/8. PROJECT BUDGET

Financial resources

10 partner churches donate \$125. each	\$1250
Presbytery’s Peace, Justice and Hunger Workgroup	\$2000
Synod Peacemaking Fund	<u>\$1500</u>
Total	\$4750

Proposed expenses

Honoraria (5 speakers X \$500)	\$2500
Travel	\$1500
Postage and publicity	\$ 500
Old First services (organist and custodian)	<u>\$ 250</u>
Total	\$4750

Partner churches have written letters of commitment to donate funds (\$125 each) and workers. A sub-account, named The HAV Account, has been established by the Old

South Haven Church to receive and disburse funds. Their treasurer, Richard Thomas, will manage the account and Bob Baum will oversee the receipt and disbursement of funds. All incoming checks will be made out to Bob Baum and sent to his address. The Peace, Justice and Hunger Workgroup voted formally to donate the amount of \$2,000. at it's January meeting.

9. DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

This event is scheduled to take place on Saturday, May 3, 2003. All speakers have accepted our invitation. Old First Huntington had offered the use of their facilities. Partner churches have begun to send in their checks. We are currently working on publicity and a schedule for the day. Many details will be fine-tuned in the coming dinner/planning meetings.

10. PROJECT EVALUATION

Prior to the event, HAV is seeking approval for the use of Peacemaking funds from Mission Council on March 4, 2003, as well as from Presbytery Council on March 12. We are asking, as well, for the endorsement of the Council on Education.

We plan to distribute and collect evaluation questionnaires at the event. Each of the HAV partners will be responsible for submitting a summary statement from a meeting of their own attendees. The Presbytery's Peace Justice and Hunger Workgroup will also evaluate the event at their May meeting.

11. APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION

HAV (Honoring All Voices) is a new, loosely formed group of ten churches in our Presbytery, who have joined together to plan this event. At first, we met informally because of our concern that our national church and our country seemed to have lost the capacity for, or tolerance of, effective dissent. Questioning voices have been routinely silenced and criticized by majority opinion. We wanted to once again work toward making the church a safe place to express dissent and individual conscience. This event is the result of our shared vision.

12. FOLLOW UPS

We plan to tape our speakers and record the event through photos and possible videotaping. We will invite the press to attend and report our event to the Long Island community. However, we do not plan to issue press releases prior to May 3rd, because we are limiting the audience to Presbyterians. We would share with the Synod Grant Committee our brochure, photos, and press coverage.