

December 14

This year's advent devotionals feature readings from publications by Pittsburgh Theological Seminary faculty members. Today's reading comes from the book *A History of Presbyterian Missions 1944-2007*. It is written by Scott Sunquist and Caroline Becker and is a project of the World Mission Initiative at PTS. Sunquist serves as Professor of World Christianity at PTS. Becker, his daughter, graduated from PTS in 2006. It is published by Geneva Press and is available through Cokesbury.com.

The reading begins on page 84:

The definition of what constitutes mission has now been expanded. Sixty years ago it was largely limited to preaching, teaching, and medical assistance. Today it continues to stress those three basics, but it has been expanded to include race relations, justice issues, homelessness, peace and reconciliation, AIDS education, and community development, to name a few. Mission includes anything that brings life in all its abundance to humankind. At the heart of the program is Jesus Christ. This has not changed and never will. The Great Commission and Great Commandment are still our guides in mission. We still define our mission by what he brought to the world: good news to the poor, release to the captive, recovery of sight to the blind, and freedom to the oppressed. And his presence goes with us to the end of the age.

Prayer

Loving God, through Christ you have reached out to us offering healing and hope. In mission both close and far away, your people reach out to others with emotional, physical, and spiritual comfort and support. Widen our vision for mission in the world, and open our hearts to all of your possibilities for sharing of the gospel in many ways. Especially in this season, continue to keep our focus on Jesus Christ who goes with us wherever you may lead. Amen.