

2020 Vision Team – Interim Report

February 16, 2018

Recommendation:

1. **The 2020 Vision Team recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) forward the proposed draft of the Guiding Statement to the Church for study and comment in consideration of submitting it to the 224th General Assembly (2020) for approval. All comments should be directed to the Office of General Assembly by June 1, 2019.**

Rationale:

The proposed Draft Guiding Statement directly responds to the mandate (see Appendix A) created at the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

Draft Guiding Statement

Our Reformed heritage understands the power of words and we humbly offer this guiding statement as speaking truth and declaring life.

The 2020 Vision Team was mandated by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and charged with developing a guiding statement for the denomination as it moves into the future.

In the faithful desire to discern the will of God we listened throughout the denomination and beyond, hearing hope and frustration, expectation and anxiety.

Along our journey even when it is hard to see the way forward, God has spoken and continues to speak to us in these times and places.

Therefore, God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be:

Prayerful

- Confessing our sin before God and to those we have wronged, we accept our responsibility for the brokenness in the world and in ourselves. In Christ we are assured of forgiveness and freed to forgive others.
- We ask the Holy Spirit to direct and guide us as we actively listen to Scripture and fully engage in the joys and challenges of life in this present world.
- In Christ we are bound together by grace, cleansed in the waters of baptism, nourished at the Lord's table, and sent out to share the Good News.

Courageous

- Reformed and always being reformed, we follow the Holy Spirit in new and imaginative ways to places we have not yet been.
- We foster the hope of reconciliation in Christ that brings healing to individuals and communities, which transforms the world.
- We work for God's justice and peace for all people in every land, prioritizing the vulnerable, the marginalized, and the abused.

United

- As members of the Church universal, we are Christ's disciples, called by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- Against forces that seek to divide, Christ compels us to bear witness to a love that sustains community across great differences.
- Striving to love all of our neighbors as ourselves, we approach others in a spirit of openness and trust as we follow Jesus Christ in respecting the freedom of other religions, worldviews, and traditions.

Serving

- As followers of the One who washed his disciples' feet, we listen to and serve our neighbors, working to meet their practical needs.
- We partner with others to become the hands and feet of God in the world, showing compassion and generosity to all creation.
- We venture beyond the familiar, meeting people where they are as we share Christ's transformative love.

Alive

- We are a people of the resurrection: though death surrounds us, we are not afraid because we follow the One who was raised from the tomb.

- The Holy Spirit gives us courage to build a community that reflects the fullness of God’s image in humanity: beautifully diverse and no longer divided by age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexuality, physical and mental ability, geography, or theological conviction.
- In the sure and certain hope of resurrection, we testify that the Church and its members are called to follow Christ’s model by risking all, even life itself, for the sake of the Gospel.

And so, God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be: **Prayerful, Courageous, United, Serving, Alive.**

Thanks be to God.

The Draft Guiding Statement was created by braiding together several guiding sources: passages from Holy Scripture, foundational documents from our denomination, reports from previous General Assemblies, listening sessions across the nation, organic ideas from members of the Vision 2020 Team, and above all - the Holy Spirit. Through all of work we engaged in and were surrounded with prayer. Prayers for guidance, for openness, and for humility were offered by and to the Vision 2020 Team.

Heath Rada, Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014), compiled and presented “When We Gather At the Table” at the 222nd General Assembly (2016). This report gave the team an overview of who we are as a denomination and some of the dreams, challenges, and hopes he had heard from denominational voices during his tenure as Moderator.

Upon reflecting on the “When We Gather at the Table,” the Vision 2020 Team found it valuable to continue listening, hearing voices and reflections from various locations within the Church. In addition to hearing voices from within the denomination (churches, presbyteries, synods, agencies, etc.), the 2020 Vision Team thought it necessary to listen to voices adjacent to the church (mission partners, other denominations, etc.) and voices outside the church (other faiths, non-believers, etc.) to get a broader picture of what the world around us thinks of the PC(USA). A list of listening sessions conducted by the 2020 Vision Team members can be found in Appendix B and a list of the standard questions asked can be found in Appendix C.

Several themes emerged through these listening sessions:

- Continuing commitment to and appreciation of the PC(USA) emphasis on thoughtful, disciplined engagement with scripture
- A sense of urgent need to address issues such as racism, poverty, income inequality, climate change, domestic violence, and human rights
- Growing excitement about new ways of doing and being church
- A longing for connectionalism based in community rather than bureaucracy
- A desire to maintain, deepen, and expand ties to the global church
- Fear about what shifts in religious culture and decline in church attendance and participation will mean for the future of the PC(USA)
- Frustration with systemic and structural barriers to adaptive change that will enable us to meet the challenges ahead
- Anxiety about finances at the congregational, mid council, and General Assembly level
- A sense that we need to name this moment and articulate a vision for moving forward

While developing and compiling new content, the 2020 Vision Team recognized the previous work of the Church and visioning. The 2020 Vision Team studied the “Six Great Ends of the Church” from the Book of Order F-1.0304. The team also studied and reflected on several biblical passages, including Haggai, Proverbs 19:21, Habakkuk 1-2:3 and Mark 8: 27-29, etc.

The draft guiding statement is a product of its time, much like the “Six Great Ends of the Church.” The 2020 Vision Team recognizes the PC(USA) is at a turning point. The 2020 Vision Team offers this draft guiding statement to sessions, presbyteries, synods, PC(USA) agencies, and other bodies in the Church as an evaluative framework: What can we celebrate? What areas need additional work? What efforts might we need to abandon? How might the Draft Guiding Statement be used within the church and beyond? We envision this draft Guiding Statement as a challenge for moving the PC(USA) at all levels forward in new, imaginative, and Spirit-filled ways.

The 2020 Vision Team will continue to build on this groundwork over the next two years, as this draft guiding statement is a living document. The team will be focused on study, prayer, and discernment of the Draft Guiding Statement including an invitation for feedback. Feedback will be received in numerous ways including electronic surveys, open communication via email, and structured listening sessions led by 2020 Vision Team members. Some of these focus groups listening sessions will be conducted at large events such as Triennium and Big Tent 2019 as well as smaller events upon request.

The 2020 Vision Team will also develop materials to help agencies, sessions, congregations, and other bodies of the Church interact with the statement. Materials will be available that can help assess the vibrancy of their mission and how the new

guiding statement may be integrated, enhancing their established work while inspiring new ministries. We pray these supplemental materials will help the fullness of the denomination live into the Guiding Statement in their mission work and birthing new ministries, and will be a resource in deepening the intimacy of their relationship with God. The Guiding Statement invites us as individuals to internalize an identity as prayerful, courageous, united, serving, and alive!

The remaining work of the 2020 Vision Team will focus on ensuring the new vision be accessible and available to all those in the denomination and beyond. To this end, if there are resources to be allocated to the Way Forward Commission and/or the All Agency Review Committee that include work with a branding consultant, we will dedicate our time with said consultant to work on an implementation plan. Finally, we raise our voices in naming the need to make sure the current Draft Guiding Statement, the supplemental materials to be developed, and the Guiding Statement to be produced for the 224th General Assembly (2020) be accessible to the fullness of the body through translation into as many of our worshipping languages as possible.

By the 224th General Assembly (2020), the 2020 Vision Team will complete the mandate given by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to produce a Guiding Statement for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and a plan for its implementation.

Appendix A:

The Assembly Committee on the Way Forward recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) direct the Co-Moderators, in consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) and the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR), to name a “2020 Vision Team” of fifteen people to develop a guiding statement for the denomination and make a plan for its implementation with all deliberate speed. The process of developing such a guiding statement will help us to name and claim our denominational identity as we seek to follow the Spirit into the future.

1. *The committee shall be made up of the following:*
 - a. *At least six teaching elders and at least six ruling elders.*
 - b. *The following demographic traits should be considered when naming members of the committee: gender identity; geographic location; inclusion of people under the age of forty (with special attention paid to young adult advisory delegates (YAADs) serving on the Assembly Committee on “The Way Forward” of the 222nd General Assembly (2016)); racial ethnic minorities; those engaged in both parish and validated ministries; theological diversity (people representative of all the “clusters” identified in “When We Gather at the Table”).*
 - c. *The following skill sets should be considered when naming members of the committee: strategic planning, visioning, experience on administrative commissions.*
 - d. *The Co-Moderators of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall serve as additional, ex officio, members of this committee.*
2. *The committee shall build upon the work begun in “When We Gather at the Table” as well as Moderator Heath Rada’s report made to the 222nd General Assembly (2016).*
3. *The committee should conduct targeted listening exercises with various constituencies throughout the PC(USA) in an effort to discern where the Spirit is leading the church in the future. These may include, but are not limited to: congregations, presbyteries, synods, and seminaries. Such conversations should center on the calling of the church (Book of Order, F-1.03) as well as the vision these constituencies have of how God is calling them to respond to “what breaks God’s heart” in their communities.*
4. *The committee should also look outside the walls of the church to seek best practices and resources for being relevant to the changing landscapes of local, national, and international communities.*
5. *The committee will develop recommendations that shall be the only business for the Assembly Committee on The Way Forward to review at the 223rd General Assembly (2018). The only exception would be overtures that respond directly to any reports from the 2020 Vision Team. The intention is that there will be a new vision for the denomination by the 224th General Assembly (2020).*
6. *The assembly shall allocate sufficient resources for this committee to effectively accomplish its work.*

Appendix B:

#	Listening Group	Date	Point Person(s)
4--60	Presbytery of Inland Northwest	Feb-17	Justin/Sabrina
1	Executive Presbyter (Presbytery of Inland Northwest)	Feb-17	Justin/Sabrina
30	Presbytery of Maumee Valley	Mar-17	Becca
	In Christ Supporting Ministry, Charlotte, NC	Mar-17	De`Ann
20	Presbytery of Southern New England	May-17	Josh N
14	Presbytery of New York City-General Cabinet	May-17	Josh N
5	Congregation: First PC Stamford (Stamford, CT)	May-17	Josh N
5	Informal, young alumni of Princeton Theological Seminary (Alumni week)	May-17	Sabrina

50	Detroit Presbytery	Jun-17	Becca
	Twin Cities Presbytery	June-July 2017	Becca, Salvador, Jerrod
	Informal, World Communion of Reformed Churches (Germany)	June-July 2017	Sabrina
13	Foothills Presbytery GA Reform Group	Jul-17	Debbie
60	Big Tent (2 Formal Sessions)	Jul-17	Vision 2020
20	Big Tent Table Talks	Jul-17	Vision 2020
6	Big Tent Informal Sessions	Jul-17	Josh A
180	Greater Atlanta Presbytery	Aug-17	Chris and Debbie
40	Presbytery of Geneva - Small Church Gathering (informal listening)	Sep-17	Sabrina
	Presbytery of Utah	Sep-17	Jerrod
200	Lake Michigan Presbytery	Sep-17	Becca
6	Racial Ethnic & New Immigrant Seminaries Session	Nov-17	Josh N
5	PCUSA Chaplains	Nov-17	Josh A
10	Wooster Ukirk	Dec-17	Becca
	Association of Presbyterian Christian Educators	Jan-18	Debbie and Salvador
120	Foothills Presbytery	Feb-18	Debbie
	Synod of the South Atlantic	Mar-18	Debbie
15	Congregation: Martin Luther King, Jr. PC (Springfield, MA)		Josh N
	Synod of Mid-America		Salvador

Appendix C:

We developed three sets of questions to target different groups of people we wanted to hear from. The first survey was shared with members of the PC(USA). The second survey was shared with groups of individuals that are connected with Church but may not be members of the denomination. This group includes our ecumenical partners, campus ministries, etc. Our third survey focused on connecting with those outside of the Church such as nonprofit organizations, social justice groups, the nones and dones, and those with no affiliation to any church.

Survey 1:

1. What do you think breaks God's heart in your local community?
2. What do you think God might be calling us as Christians to do about this, and to do in general?
3. What do you feel lifts up God's heart in your local community?
4. How could our denomination do things even more effectively than we have been doing?
5. How is the PC(USA) engaging you, and also not engaging you?
6. What else would you like to share with us?

Survey 2:

1. How are you connected with the PC(USA), if at all?
2. What do you think breaks God's heart in your local community?
3. What do you think God might be calling us as Christians to do about this, and to do in general?
4. What do you feel lifts up God's heart in your area?
5. What, if anything, do you see as PC(USA)'s unique calling?
6. What else would you like to share with us?

Survey 3:

1. How do you find meaning and purpose in your life?
2. What do you think of when you hear the words "Christian churches" and "Presbyterian"?
3. What lifts your heart in your local community?
4. What breaks your heart in your local community?
5. What might people do about this?
6. How might a religious community be involved in this?
7. What else would you like to share with us?