

**UNEDITED VERSION**

**Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**  
**General Assembly Way Forward Commission**

**Recommendation and Report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018)**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. [Composition of the Board of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“A Corp”)] The Way Forward Commission and the All Agency Review Committee jointly recommend to the 223rd General Assembly (2018):**

**RECOMMENDATION 1.a. That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approve the joint recommendations of the Way Forward Commission and All Agency Review Committee to restructure the governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“A Corp.”) as outlined in their reports and below and, consistent therewith, direct that the following actions be taken within thirty (30) days after the adjournment of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) so that the newly constituted Board of Directors can hold its initial organizational meeting within ninety (90) days of this action:**

**(1) That the Board of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, consistent with Section 6.06 of the current Amended Bylaws of “A Corp.”, approve the amendments of such bylaws set forth below;**

**(2) That the Board of Directors of “A Corp.” adopt the amendments to the Amended Bylaws of “A Corp.” set forth below; and**

**(3) That the current Board of Directors of “A Corp.”, upon adoption of such amendments, tender their resignations as directors to be effective at the conclusion of the meeting, or upon execution of the unanimous consent, adopting such amendments.**

**RECOMMENDATION 1.b. That the 223rd General Assembly (2018), in the expectation that the actions in Recommendations 1.a. above and 1.c. below will be carried out in a timely fashion, elect nine nominees, selected as described in Recommendation 1.c. below, to the Board of Directors of “A Corp.” to fill the vacancies to be created by the resignations of the then-current Board of “A Corp.” as described in Recommendation 1.a.(3) above.**

**RECOMMENDATION 1.c. That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) direct the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation (“A Corp”), to do the following:**

**(1) Amend the current Amended Bylaws of “A Corp” to change the number and composition of the board, beginning as of the day following the conclusion of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), as follows:**

(a) Amend Section 2.01 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“Section 2.01. Selection of Directors. The members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be selected and may be removed as follows:~~

~~“The members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board of the Presbytery Church (U.S.A.) shall, by virtue of their offices, be Directors of the Corporation.~~

*“Section 2.01. Selection and Term of Directors.*

*“(a) The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be nine in number. Any vacancies in such number between General Assemblies shall be filled promptly, pursuant to the procedures of Section 4.05 of these bylaws, subject to the person or persons filling such vacancy or vacancies having been first recommended by the relevant council, agency, office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with respect to the directors in Section 2.01(b) below, and subject in all cases to the Board of Directors of the Corporation first consulting with the General Assembly Committee on Representation and the General Assembly Nominating Committee.*

*“(b) The governing board of directors, trustees, or committee of the following councils, agencies, or offices of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall, in consultation with the General Assembly Committee on Representation and the General Assembly Nominating Committee, each recommend to the General Assembly Nominating Committee a person (not an employee of such council, agency, or office), to serve as a director of the Corporation:*

*“(i) The Office of the General Assembly: one person to serve as a director of the Corporation;*

*“(ii) The Presbyterian Mission Agency: one person to serve as a director of the Corporation;*

*“(iii) The Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): one person to serve as a director of the Corporation;*

*“(iv) The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): one person to serve as a director of the Corporation;*

*“(v) The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Corporation, Inc.: one person to serve as a director of the Corporation;*

*“(vi) The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation: one person to serve as a director of the Corporation.*

*“(c) The General Assembly Nominating Committee shall nominate as directors the persons recommended through the process of Section 2.01(b) of these bylaws unless, as to any person recommended, such person fails to satisfy the requirements of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or these bylaws.*

*In such case, the General Assembly Nominating Committee shall immediately request, and the governing board of directors or trustees of the relevant council, agency, or office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall immediately provide, a new recommendation to the General Assembly Nominating Committee.*

*“(d) The General Assembly Nominating Committee shall, in addition, nominate three at-large directors to the board of the Corporation.*

*“(e) Nominations from the floor of the General Assembly shall be permitted only as to the three at-large directors of the Corporation.*

*“(f) Each director of the Corporation shall serve a term of four (4) years, except that:*

*“(i) A director shall be eligible, if recommended, nominated, and elected, to serve a second four (4) year term as a director of the Corporation; and*

*“(ii) No director shall serve as a director of the Corporation for more than eight (8) years in total.”*

(b) Amend Section 2.05 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

*“Section 2.05. Organization. The Board of Directors shall elect annually from among the members of the Board a Chair of the Board, ~~who may serve one two-year, non-renewable term, and a vice chair of the Board, also for one two-year, non-renewable term.~~ At every meeting of the Board of Directors, the chair, or, in the absence of the chair, the vice chair or a chair chosen by a majority of the Directors present, shall preside, and the secretary, or in the absence of the secretary, a assistant secretary, or any person designated by majority vote of the Board or appointed by the Chair as Secretary Pro tem or Secretary of the Meeting, shall act as secretary of the meeting and shall record the Minutes of the meeting. The Chair of the Board shall serve a term of two years and may, at the discretion of the Board, be re-elected to up to two more two-year terms during such director’s tenure on the Board, for a maximum of six consecutive years. The Board of Directors may elect from among its members a Vice-Chair of the Board, subject to the same term limitations as the Chair, to serve as Chair in the absence of the Chair, but not to automatically succeed the Chair upon the expiration of the term of the Chair. At every meeting of the Board of Directors, the Chair, or in the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, or in the absence of the Vice-Chair, a Chair pro tem chosen by a majority vote of a quorum of the Board then present, shall preside. The Board of Directors shall appoint a Secretary of the Board, which may be the Secretary of the Corporation, to serve at the pleasure of the Board. The Secretary or, in the absence of the Secretary, a Secretary pro tem chosen by a majority vote of a quorum of the Board then present, shall act as secretary of the meeting and shall record the Minutes of the meeting.”*

(c) Amend Section 2.09 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

**“Section 2.09. Quorum, Manner of Acting, and Adjournment. ~~Forty percent (40%)~~ *Two-thirds (66%)* of the Directors in office shall be present at each meeting in order to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Every Director shall be entitled to one vote. Except as otherwise specified in the articles or these bylaws or provided by statute, the acts of a majority of the Directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the acts of the Board of Directors. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the Directors present and voting may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum is present. The Directors shall act only as a Board and the individual Directors shall have no power as such, except that any action which may be taken at a meeting of the Directors may be taken without a meeting, if a consent or consents in writing setting forth the action so taken shall be signed by all of the Directors in office and shall be filed with the secretary of the Corporation.”**

(d) Amend Section 4.08 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

**“Section 4.08. The President. The president shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation and shall have general supervision over the activities and operations of the Corporation, subject, however, to the control of the Board of Directors. ~~The Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency shall be the president of the Corporation.~~ The president shall be accountable to the Board of Directors. *The president, or the president’s designee pro tem, shall have voice but no vote at the meetings of the boards or governing committees of each of the six current national agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and such additional or successor agencies as may be created by the General Assembly. The president shall not, while holding such office, be a Director recommended pursuant to Section 2.01(b) or (c) above from any of the six current national agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).*”**

(e) Amend Section 4.15 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

**“Section 4.15. Compensation. The compensation of the officers, employees, and other agents shall be determined from time to time by the authority to which the power to elect such officers or to retain or appoint such employees or other agents has been delegated pursuant to Section 4.02 of this Article. ~~All compensation shall be consistent with any general compensation structure established by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.~~ *The establishment and annual review of a consistent compensation structure for all such officers, employees, and other agents shall be the responsibility of the Board of Directors, or a committee of such Board, which shall also annually review and approve the specific compensation of the five most highly-compensated such officers and employees.* No full-time officer shall be prevented from receiving compensation by reason of the fact that he or she is also a Director of the Corporation. The chair of the Board of Directors as an officer shall receive no salary or other compensation. (See also Section 2.11 of these bylaws.)”**

(f) Amend Section 4.16 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“Section 4.16. Personnel Policies. All employees, including officer employees, *are shall be* covered by personnel policies, ~~as adopted by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board~~ and *reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors, which policies shall be* set forth in ~~the~~ *an* Employee Handbook.”

(g) Amend Section 6.06 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“Section 6.06. Amendment of Bylaws. These bylaws may be amended or repealed, or new bylaws may be adopted, either (1) by the action of a majority of Directors present and voting at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors at which a quorum is present, if ten days’ written notice of such proposed amendment, repeal or new bylaws is given to each Director, or (2) by the action at any regular meeting of the Board of Directors of a majority of all of the Directors in office, where no notice of such proposed amendment, repeal or new bylaws has been given. Any such amendment, repeal, or adoption shall be consistent with the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). and with the directions from time to time of the General Assembly, and shall be reported to the next General Assembly following such amendment, repeal, or adoption. ~~The substance of any proposed amendment, repeal or new bylaws shall first be approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency.~~”

**RECOMMENDATION 1.d.** That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) direct the respective governing board of directors, trustees, or committee of the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Corporation, Inc., and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to change their respective bylaws or standing rules, as appropriate, to provide that the president of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, or such president’s designee *pro tem*, shall have voice but no vote at the meetings of such boards or committee of each of such agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and such additional or successor agencies as may be created by the General Assembly.

**RECOMMENDATION 1.e.** That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) direct the governing board of directors, trustees, or committee of the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Corporation, Inc., and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to make all such changes as may be necessary and permitted in their governing documents and policies to recognize the changes in the structure and composition of the Board of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

**RECOMMENDATION 1.f.** That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) appoint to an existing or special committee or commission of the General Assembly, or delegate to the

proposed Moving Forward Implementation Commission in Recommendation 5, the task of reviewing and ensuring the effectiveness of the changes to the Amended Bylaws of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, revising the membership of its Board of Directors and selection of President, with a direction (a) that such committee report to the current “A Corp.” Board any additional recommended changes to such Amended Bylaws within one year, and (b) that the committee described above make itself available for a year following the conclusion of the 223rd General Assembly to consult with such governance committees, standing rules committees, and other committees and councils of the church as may wish for advice in conforming their by-laws or manuals of operations as necessary to the changes in board governance of “A Corp.” If any member of this committee or commission is a representative of the Presbyterian Mission Agency or of the Office of the General Assembly, the General Assembly shall ensure that both such agencies are represented among the committee or commission members.

**RECOMMENDATION 1.g.** That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) require the appointment, in each of the two General Assemblies following the election of the new board of directors of “A Corp.”, a committee for review of “A Corp.” and that the 225th General Assembly (2022) determine, after the second such review, if additional separate reviews are needed and, if so, the schedule and method for such ongoing review of “A Corp.”

**RECOMMENDATION 1.h.** That the 223rd General Assembly (2018) amend Chapters V, VI, and VII of the portion of the Manual of the General Assembly known as the Organization for Mission, as indicated in the attached Appendix 10, to confirm the scope of authority and relationships between the Presbyterian Mission Agency and The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, and to recognize the changes in governance of “A Corp.” [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

2. **[Role of the Stated Clerk.]** The Way Forward Commission recommends the 223rd General Assembly (2018)

**RECOMMENDATION 2.a.** Amend the *Manual of the General Assembly* called the *Organization for Mission*, Chapter IV.B.2. with a new section “a” and renumber the current a–p as b–q. The new section IV.B.2.a. shall read as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

*“a. In partial fulfillment of his/her role as the continuing ecclesial officer and Head of Communion for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Stated Clerk will offer constitutional and spiritual leadership for the life and witness of the church and exercise pastoral authority over concerns of the church in times of crisis. The Stated Clerk is the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s chief ecumenical officer and its primary representative in national and international interchurch and interfaith organizations and speaks to and for the church in matters of faith and practice except as the General Assembly directs otherwise.”*

**RECOMMENDATION 2.b.** Amend the *Organization for Mission*, Chapter IV.B.2.n., as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“n. The Stated Clerk shall promote the harmony and efficiency of the General Assembly and its agencies in cooperation with the Presbyterian Mission Agency and its Executive Director, with special attention to relationships between General Assembly entities, and with synods, presbyteries, and sessions. The Stated Clerk shall have membership on or relationship to appropriate committees; *and* commissions, and agencies of the General Assembly as it shall determine from time to time. *The Stated Clerk shall serve ex-officio on the Board of Directors for the Presbyterian Mission Agency and other agencies (identified in Chapter VIII of the Organization for Mission) including voice but not vote at all meetings while in either open or closed session. Furthermore, the Stated Clerk shall be consulted about any candidate before the candidate’s name is brought to a Board for election as the agency executive (chief officer) or interim agency executive (other than for a replacement for the Stated Clerk position).*”

**RECOMMENDATION 2.c.** Amend the *Organization for Mission*, Chapter IV.D.1., so that it reads as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“1. Based on a six-year schedule, the agencies of the General Assembly will be reviewed to evaluate the relationship of their individual ministry with the mission of the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). On nomination of the General Assembly Nominating Committee, the General Assembly will elect two committees, each to review the work of one of the agencies of the General Assembly. Each committee will be composed of twelve members: four commissioners from the previous three General Assemblies, four who have served on the board of a General Assembly entity other than the one being reviewed, and four at large. The at-large members may include ecumenical partners. The committee will use the Standards for Review of General Assembly Agencies in the Guidelines and Policies of the General Assembly. The committee will report to the *Stated Clerk who will present the report, along with any additional recommendations from the Stated Clerk*, to the next General Assembly following its election the results of the review and make recommendations based on its findings.”

**RECOMMENDATION 2.d.** Instruct the Board of Directors for the Presbyterian Mission Board, Board of Pensions, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Foundation, and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to amend their by-laws and manuals to be in compliance with the provisions of paragraphs 3.02 and 3.03 above. These agencies may continue to speak within their own realm of responsibility pursuant to already existing policies that will remain unchanged.

**RECOMMENDATION 3.** [Financial Sustainability of the National Denomination.] The Way Forward Commission recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) create a twelve-person committee (to be appointed by the Moderator/Co-Moderators of the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly after consultation with the General Assembly Nominations Committee and the Committee on Representation, and to include two presbytery executives and one synod executive) with a deadline of 12/31/2019, to provide a comprehensive resource projection analysis and summary assessment — in conjunction with the Presbyterian Foundation and representatives of all other Agencies — of national church assets and income for financial sustainability review. Such analysis/report will be

forwarded to each of the six agencies, the 2020 Vision Team, and the ongoing Moving Forward Implementation Commission proposed in Recommendation 5.

4. **[Inclusion and Equity]** The Way Forward Commission recommends that the 223rd General Assembly (2018)

**RECOMMENDATION 4.a. [Diversity and Reconciliation.]** Require that all six agencies participate in the Diverse Voices Table being established (described under Ongoing Commission Administrative Actions below); and similar what has been undertaken by the PMA's Office on Diversity and Reconciliation, create a process to examine issues of equity and inclusion particular to their own agencies.

**RECOMMENDATION 4.b. [Completion of Audits.]** Require that the prior Assembly (2016) mandate for personnel audits from each agency be completed by January 1, 2019 and to recur every four years [see GA 222 item 1-24 (1.b.) "Churchwide Conversation on Race, Ethnicity, Racism and Ethnocentricity Report"].

**RECOMMENDATION 4.c. [Translation Services.]** Require that all translation services of the six agencies be moved to shared services under A Corp, and be staffed appropriately in order to provide translation services to all six agencies for translation of all materials going forward and historical/existing records upon request, with prioritization and exceptions of translation services is to be discerned and directed by an inclusive group, such as the Diverse Voices Table being established (described under Ongoing Commission Administrative Action below). Translations services shall include websites and the translation into English of materials originally written in other languages. Translations services will be one more service residing within Shared Services in A Corp. The total cost of these services shall be allocated to and paid for by each agency as a percentage of work completed. Specific funding sources and budgets used by each agency shall be determined by their respective board(s)/committee(s) and/or executive leadership.

**RECOMMENDATION 5. [Moving Forward Implementation Commission.]** The Way Forward Commission and the All-Agency Review Committee jointly recommend that the 223rd General Assembly (2018) create a "Moving Forward Implementation Commission" (to be appointed by the Moderator/Co-Moderators of the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly after consultation with the General Assembly Committee on Representation, and to include four members of the 2016 Way Forward Commission, four members of the 2016 All-Agency Review Committee, and four members to be appointed from the commissioners of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) (including one Young Adult Advisory Delegate), for a term ending at the 224th General Assembly (2020), with the mandate and authority to (1) ensure compliance and implementation of 2018 assembly action on recommendations from the Way Forward Commission and the All-Agency Review Committee, (2) ensure continued implementation of collaborations and commission administrative actions underway as outlined in this report and the report of the All-Agency Review Committee, (3) coordinate with the 2020 Vision Team, (4) report findings and make recommendations to the 224th General Assembly (2020). If any of the four members to be appointed from the 223rd General Assembly (2018) is a representative of the Presbyterian Mission Agency or of the Office of the General Assembly, the General Assembly shall ensure that both such agencies are represented among those four members.

**RECOMMENDATION 6. [Concurrence with Other Recommendations of the All-Agency Review Committee.] The Way Forward Commission concurs with the Recommendations of the All-Agency Review Committee with respect to Agency Reviews.**

## **RATIONALE**

### **Introduction**

The Way Forward Commission was created by the 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly (2016). We celebrate that our birth occurred in the same Assembly that ratified The Confession of Belhar and remembered the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Confession of 1967. We acknowledge the Holy Spirit at work and we believe it is our task to live into the promise and hope these Confessions proclaim.

Living into that promise requires that we act boldly and collaboratively. We capitalize on this unique opportunity to assist the church in living out its call to Christian witness and service in and for the world. We are, by God's grace, ever reforming. We claim that truth with a spirit of openness and possibility.

The commission began its work by –

- Reviewing in detail all historical documents and recent resources
- Understanding the current context
- Declaring a set of values that would guide us

(Appendix 1 sets forth our meeting schedule. Appendix 6 sets forth the Commission's Affirmation of Approach outlining the values that informed our work. Appendix 7 sets forth the Commission's Mid-Term Report that details our process of discernment.)

We then talked with and heard from people all across the denomination. We engaged ecumenical partners. We partnered with the All Agency Review Committee and the 2020 Vision Team, and although we were given distinct mandates, we discovered significant commonalities and discernments as we embarked in our work. We are grateful for the encouragement we received and for the honest, thoughtful, faithful and creative feedback provided. And that reinforced our discernment that indeed we were a denomination ready for change. (Appendix 2 lists some of those groups with whom we have collectively conducted thousands of hours of conversations across the church.)

We give thanks for those who labor within the structures of our church – for their ongoing commitment to the church and their work during this time of questioning and scrutiny, and for their collaborative spirit in moving us forward. (Appendix 4 illustrates the embodiment of this

willingness to change in a summary of the initiatives, both internal and collaborative, for improvement in each of our agencies.)

Within our denomination we believe there is –

- A willingness to let go of things which no longer serve the mission and vision of the church
- A commitment to inclusion and equity as a key part of who we are
- A new energy, enthusiasm, liveliness and vitality
- An openness to change, collaboration and partnership, acting together as one body
- An understanding that we must be responsive and nimble
- A renewed sense that God is present and active in our midst

Thanks be to God.

*We work with confidence that our triune God gathers, protects and cares for the church through Word and Spirit as our God has done since the beginning of the world and will do to the end. (Confession of Belhar, 10.1)*

The rationale for our recommendations follow along with additional context and information regarding work that will continue. The appendices include more detailed information. We encourage you to review this document in its entirety to better understand the process and recommendations of the Way Forward Commission.

### **Themes of Change**

We have not understood our charge to be one of finding ways to manage decline, or to tinker with existing structures in the hope of assuring institutional survival. Rather, encouraged by our calling through the voice of the General Assembly, the counsel of the Stated Clerk, and words of admonition and encouragement from thousands of Presbyterians, we have set a bolder course. We believe we are a changing church in a changing world and that our ways of work and witness must reflect the dynamism of our contemporary lives.

We strongly affirm the good work happening in our church, and the dedication and hard work of those in ministry at the local, regional, and national level. The lack of clarity as to how we as a denomination see ourselves in the changed and changing world of the 21st Century, both in terms of how we intersect with the world and how we act together as one body in Christ, has forced us to face the realities of falling short of being all we can be. This is a time for radical improvement, collaborative creativity, and dramatic innovation. We are all invited to ask ourselves and one another: What are our strengths as a denomination? What does the present moment call us to do and to be? How can we better help congregations and local ministries thrive and grow? What are we not doing or able to do differently?

Three broad themes emerged from our conversations throughout the denomination, and reflect the “why” behind our recommendations and our collaborative work:

1. the core of who how we see ourselves as “church”;
2. our unity in our diversity; and
3. embodying relationships as we live our calling together as Presbyterians.

We believe that, taken together, the recommendations we are making and the administrative actions we are taking weave together a new way of functioning together as one body in Christ that will strengthen our internal life, our external witness, our inclusiveness and our nimbleness.

For background and context, we have included a summary of the current structure of our national denomination in Appendix 8.

### **Functioning as “Church”**

**Rationale for Recommendation 1: Ecclesial and Missional Focus.** At the core of who we are as “church” lie the two primary and unique functions of ecclesial and missional work. Yet a common theme in our conversations and analysis is that it is critical to shake off the 20th Century forms, eschewing the corporate structure, model, and mindset which often allow the support functions to drive decision-making rather than the ecclesial or missional visions. Our recommendations with respect to the role of the Stated Clerk (Recommendation 3) and the composition of the board of the church corporation (Recommendation 1) are designed to return our focus to our ecclesial and our missional core -- that is, our unique witness and service to the world.

It has become clear that the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of General Assembly need to be freed from administrative burdens to fully define the role of the church in ecclesial and missional work. In strengthening the missional aspect of that call, innovative models of mission delivery, not corporate or administrative responsibilities, should be the central, critical role of the national agencies. We believe that the Presbyterian Mission Agency especially, has been saddled for far too long with corporate responsibilities that create barriers for gifted staff and hinder their full focus on mission and coordination with congregations, mid councils, and global ecumenical partners. Recognizing the importance of these requirements as well as the stewardship obligations inherent in the funding and work of the national church, we are striving for the most transformative methods of mission engagement.

As a result of our recommendation on the composition of the A Corp Board, the Board of PMA and COGA would -- as they do now -- determine the priorities and directions of the church, how we witness the Gospel in the world, yet would be newly liberated from the support tasks that have given rise to the tensions, distractions and dysfunctions that gave rise to the creation of our Commission. Our proposals do not add any new powers to “A Corp” or change its deliverance from the General Assembly. Nor do they change the existing powers of the Board

of PMA or Committee of OGA. Our proposed amendments to denominational documents such as the Organization for Mission are designed to make it clearer that the purpose of PMA, for example, is to make and carry out the mission decisions of the church, and that the role of “A Corp” is to assist and support those decisions.

Fundamental to our approach is the concept that decision-making role about what our national ecclesial and missional work is, and how best to do it, resides in COGA and the Board of PMA, exercising authority derived from the General Assembly. Those entities are not, nor should they be, corporate in nature. In contrast, “A Corp,” as we view it under our recommendations, functions like a corporate “utility” to assist and support the decisions of these ecclesial and missional agencies (and other parts of the church); its role is not to second-guess or change such decisions. And to promote a church culture reflective of our vision to live as “one body in Christ,” we also make it clear in changes in our Organization for Mission, our ecclesial document, that even when acting in our corporate or individual agency contexts, all officers, directors and employees must consider in all matters the church as a whole ahead of any individual benefit or detriment to an individual agency. We recognize that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that none of our organizations has any authority but in Him, and they are charged to work together to realize the mission and great ends of his church in all respects.

The creation of our Commission was due to significant and longstanding issues involving the agencies of the church, particularly PMA. We are recommending these changes because they are the least intrusive way to encourage people to work together as one body in Christ, to lift a heavy burden off one agency that has distracted it from its primary task, and to provide greater equity in our structure among our agencies.

Recommendation 1.a and Recommendation 1.b set forth the process for implementation of the change in composition of the “A Corp.” board.

Recommendation 1.c amends the Bylaws of “A Corp.” to reflect the rationales outlined above. To ensure diversity in the “A Corp.” board, nominations and filling of vacancies will be done in consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee and the General Assembly Committee on Representation.

Recommendation 1.d allows the President of “A Corp.” to have voice but not vote at the board meetings of the six national agencies. This recommendation would help emphasize the cooperative nature of the relationship between “A Corp” and the church’s six current agencies while also underscoring (by the absence of vote) that “A Corp” does not control those agencies.

Recommendation 1.e directs the boards of the six agencies to make conforming changes to their own governing documents. This implementing resolution would simply require the existing agencies of the church to recognize the new governance structure for “A Corp” The agencies are in the best position to define the particular language they may need to manage their own recommendations for who should serve on the Board of “A Corp”, for example.

Recommendation 1.f provides for a General Assembly committee or commission to oversee and assist in implementing the “A Corp.” transition. To the extent the General Assembly believes that it would be useful to ensure on a comprehensive basis that any changes in form necessary to implement the substance of its changes in the governance of “A Corp” are accomplished prior to the selection of a new Board, this recommendation would accomplish that.

Recommendation 1.g provides for a General Assembly review in each of the 2020 and 2022 General Assemblies of the effectiveness of the “A Corp.” changes. While “A Corp” already exists, is not an agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and already provides audit information to the General Assembly, it would be appropriate to make sure that the changes proposed for its governance receive review to determine their effectiveness. This recommendation would accomplish this consistent with the practices used by the General Assembly in other contexts.

Recommendation 1.h amends the Organization for Mission to better reflect the roles of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and “A Corp.” to reflect the rationales outlined above. This includes the fundamental concept in Section VI, critically important, that all officers, directors and employees must consider in all matters the church as a whole ahead of any individual benefit or detriment to an individual agency, recognizing that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that none of our organizations has any authority but in Him, and they are charged to work together to realize the mission and great ends of his church in all respects.

Appendix 5 outlines some important considerations and additional rationales that went into this joint recommendation by the Way Forward Commission and the All-Agency Review Committee, as well as answers to some frequently asked questions. The Way Forward Commission and the All-Agency Review Committee plan to work further on the logistics and implications of our recommendations over the months ahead so we can provide June’s Assembly with the benefit of the best transition thinking, and have invited the Board of PMA and COGA to participate in that process (Ongoing Commission Administrative Action 9 below).

In addition, our continuing work in the area of shared services reflects our conviction that there can and should be better and more cost-effective ways to deliver corporate and administrative services that positions the functions as supportive to the missional components of the national agencies (Ongoing Commission Administrative Action 1 below).

**Rationale for Recommendation 2: Stated Clerk.** The church is called to speak Gospel truth to the world today; indeed, it is critical to both mission, evangelism and worship. Nonetheless, we grew to believe we could strengthen the voice of the church by clarifying who represents the church in public witness on behalf of the denomination and who serves as a central voice within

the denomination. The present ambiguity is not an issue about an individual but rather an issue of structure, roles, and responsibilities.

Our constitutional documents make it clear that the Stated Clerk has a unique role on behalf of the denomination, articulating the hope, ministry, and direction both internally for us and externally on behalf of us, bound in all cases by the General Assembly, while maintaining our reformed polity of “shared power . . . exercised jointly” (*Book of Order*, F- 3.0208). Our recommendation with respect to the Stated Clerk (Recommendation 2) recognizes the uniqueness of his/her leadership role within the church and will serve to assure greater institutional coherence making explicit the role of the Stated Clerk in interpreting and fulfilling the will and policies of the General Assembly.

Recommendation 2.a provide further clarity that the Clerk speaks for and on behalf of the church in times of crisis. At the same time, we acknowledge the appropriate role of each agency to speak to the issues under its purview, and leave existing policies with respect to such statements in place. We also continue to encourage collaborative conversations to ensure coordinated messaging.

Recommendation 2.b provides for the Clerk to be present ex officio at the boards of the national agencies and to be consulted when changing agency executives.

Recommendation 2.c provides for the Clerk to serve as the conduit for the General Assembly for agency reviews.

Recommendation 2.d directs the boards of the six agencies to make conforming changes to their own governing documents.

**Rationale for Recommendation 3: Financial Sustainability.** The financial sustainability of our national church funding patterns continues to be a central source of anxiety for churches, mid-councils, and the six agencies, and has been the subject of an overture to the 2018 Assembly from Newton Presbytery. Our recommendation to create a committee to provide a comprehensive projection and analysis of the financial realities will assist the church in understanding and planning for any changes that may be required to ensure financial sustainability.

### **Unity in Diversity**

**Rationale for Recommendation 4: Inclusion and Equity.** As Presbyterians we value the gift of the richness of our diversity, recognize that the Good News belongs to all of God’s creation, and that inclusion and equity is central to our identity, our mission, and our growth. In order to

be authentically the church, we also recognize that this work can not be compartmentalized to one office or group, but instead should be an organized effort that permeates the entire denominational structure. Our recommendation on inclusion and equity is designed to improve the way we live our values in these critical areas.

Recommendation 4.a. Our denomination's commitment to anti-racism and inclusion places us in an ideal position to engage in conversation to prevent the perpetuation of practices that are unjust and prejudiced. We believe that we, as a church, now have the capacity to address these issues with honesty and grace. Each agency is invited to identify within themselves best practices for equity and inclusion -- whether it be employment practices, curriculum selection or leadership development. The formation of the Diverse Voices Table with representation from all agencies will allow for coordination and collaboration around these efforts to take place on a wider, denominational level, and serve as a model for mid-councils and congregations.

Recommendation 4.b directs that the personnel audits mandated by the 2016 General Assembly be completed by January 1, 2019, and that they recur every four years.

Recommendation 4.c directs that the translation services of the denomination be centralized and staffed appropriately, and that prioritization of translation services be discerned and directed by an inclusive group. The work of translation is an underused portal to being the diverse body we claim to be. It provides us with the fullness of our faith and identity and a cross-cultural vehicle. Full translation services will also provide the church with resources written in their original non-English language. Access to resources that equip and enable the church to do its work is also a matter of justice, provides the church to speak to each other, and firmly states our commitment to full inclusion.

Because of the centrality of Inclusion and Equity for the identity, mission and growth of our denomination, the Commission continues work in the following areas (Ongoing Commission Administrative Action 5 below):

- *Leadership Development for Underrepresented Populations.* Greater effort needs to be made to coordinate opportunities for leadership development for underrepresented groups in our denomination. We urge the consolidation of all denominational efforts around leadership inclusion with clear communication and networking with various representative and advocacy groups to tap into new leaders. This will require both the Office of General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to comply with regular communication with Racial-Ethnic Caucus leaders as delineated in the Covenant of Understanding Regarding the Role and Relationship of Racial Ethnic Caucuses Within the Presbyterian Church (USA) [Appendix 9]. We need to prepare leaders for the church we will be, and consider innovative ways of providing leadership development events, programs, and training. This includes nurturing leaders—ordained ministers, ruling elders, and commissioned ruling elders—of emerging minorities. It also includes a

willingness to encourage and support alternative pastoral leadership patterns best suited to the church we are becoming.

- *Shared Standards & Expectations.* We need a fuller understanding of our current intercultural realities in order to establish future goals for greater inclusion. Rather than meeting the current racial-ethnic presence in our churches, we should be addressing the social reality of changing demographics of our world. Not only would this be an expression of our hopefulness in God's creative fullness, but also help us live into our commitment to diversity and hospitality. This would include, but not be limited to, race audits of all agencies in our concerned effort to be one church, intentional inclusion of resources created by people of color and in original languages other than English. The Way Forward Commission commends the work of the Presbyterian Mission Agency's Office on Diversity and Reconciliation and encourages the other 5 agencies to also make self-studies on equity and inclusion a priority.

### **Embodying Relationships**

**Rationale for Recommendation 5: Moving Forward Implementation Commission.** This recommendation reflects the desire to maintain the hopeful momentum of the collaborative spirit that has been moving throughout the six agencies of the denomination, and to ensure follow-up on actions approved by the 2018 General Assembly and the ongoing Commission administrative action already in process. The Commission, with both finite mandate and lifespan, has been able to put into place significant collaborative dynamics these past two years, overcoming usual inertia that frustrates needed change. For these reasons, an implementation commission will be far more effective at moving forward continuing work than would an implementation committee.

**Rationale for Recommendation 6: Concurrence with All-Agency Review Recommendation on Reviews.** The recommendations of the All-Agency Review Committee regarding the timing and scope of the periodic reviews of the six national agencies and the denomination as a whole are welcome refinements to a process for improvement that has been very effective over the past decade.

Additional critical themes in this area of embodying relationships that have emerged during the Commission's discernment have included the following:

- *Congregational Focus.* The vitality of our congregations is of high importance of the church. With the strong conviction that the local church is the locus of ministry for the PC(USA) but "is not of itself a sufficient form of church" (*Book of Order*, G-1.0101), yet

congregational support is an essential priority of the national church, we believe all agencies of the denomination are presently considering innovative ways to collaborate both with each other and with mid councils to provide local churches with adequate, contextual support that is nimble and responsive. Although this can take many forms, what is central and should be central to our national structure is to continually view our activities through the lens of congregational focus and how to be responsive to the question: How can we best partner with churches in order for them to fully live into their missional call in their communities?

- *Mid Council Relationships.* Presbyteries have been described as the linchpins of our denomination. They partner directly with congregations particularly in times of transition, redevelopment, or crisis. And yet we are witnessing a sea change in the structure, staffing, funding, and responsibilities of these councils, as these bodies have borne the brunt of the significant changes within the church such as congregations departing the denomination, aging properties, and dwindling resources.. The role of synods is also in transition. There is a lack of resources affecting paid staff at the presbytery level and a reconfigured mid council ministry department within the Office of General Assembly. The national church must find additional tangible ways to partner with presbyteries and synods in support of congregations. This can be best accomplished by closer and more intentional connections between the national staff and mid councils to together explore best practices and mutual resourcing. Our ongoing Commission administrative action with respect to mid councils (Ongoing Commission Administrative Action 6 below) strives to build, maintain, and foster strong relationships with mid councils so that a nation-wide support community may be formed. The creative, life-giving work already ongoing in many congregations and mid councils need to be lifted up and shared by the national church, allowing for greater fellowship, sharing of best practices and experiences, and growing together as church.
- *Communications.* Great communication flows from strong vision and good strategic planning, and is the central mechanism for relationship. Each of the six PC(USA) agencies has a vision and strategy for communicating its vision to its constituents in the Church and in the world; however, the national church as a whole lacks a clear, coherent vision and comprehensive strategy for communication at the denominational level. We have observed a lack of unity in branding, voice, and consistency among the myriad of communication channels, the most obvious example are the denominational websites and their many iterations. We have clearly heard a desire for clear, user-friendly, and varied platforms, including everything from print to social media, to effectively communicate the work the church is doing locally and around the world. The continuing collaborative work of the Commission in the area of communications, described below

and already producing results, shows great promise for working together as one body (Ongoing Commission Administrative Action 4 below).

## **ONGOING COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

Under its authority granted by the 222nd General Assembly, the Way Forward Commission continues to work in the following areas that we hope will be generative and provide insights that will be reported in an update at the 2018 General Assembly.

1. *Shared Services (joint activity with the All-Agency Review Committee)*. The commission has partnered with AAR to engage with all six agencies to identify solutions for the cultural, cost, and efficiency issues within Shared Services. Goals for change include prioritization of program activities, proper policies and procedures, cost savings, and efficiency gains. In its continued work, the Commission will use its administrative authority to clarify authority, responsibility, and delivery of shared services by (i) conducting a review of policies and procedures with program directors and Shared Services leadership to refine, simplify and amend procedures and policies to enable more nimble and responsive action and to affirm the decision-making power at the ministry/program level; (ii) convene work groups to complete a thorough cost and efficiency analysis to prepare recommendations for the insourcing, outsourcing, or sharing of payroll processing, legal, information technology, and mail/printing/distribution services; (iii) identify other areas of partnership and cost-sharing as they may present themselves; and (iv) explore the logistics of integration of Translation Services under the Shared Services umbrella.

2. *Property and facilities usage*. Executives and selected board leadership from all six agencies have gathered for a series of meetings regarding the building at 100 Witherspoon Street and all other facilities of the national church. Topics under continued discussion include the costs and feasibility of remaining within the building at 100 Witherspoon Street, possible use of facilities to promote mission, and hospitality within each denominational building.

3. *Institutional Culture*. The commission continues to engage in ways to improve institutional culture within and among the Presbyterian Mission Agency and all six agencies. Specific areas of engagement include: (i) engaging in conversation with the PMA Executive Director search committee to assist full understanding of the vision for function and structure of the agencies as developed by the Way Forward Commission, (ii) refining the scope of work and engaging a consultant on implementing institutional culture changes, including strategies to incorporate institutional identity into training and ongoing staff development, (iii) convening conversations with PMA's Leadership Cabinet regarding changes to policies and procedures that interfere with healthy institutional culture, and (iv) convening conversations with PMA's Leadership Cabinet regarding HR Policies and whether any particular positions must be filled by a person with one

of the following requirements: by a person of faith, by a Presbyterian, or by a Ruling Elder or Teaching Elder.

4. *Communications (joint activity with the All-Agency Review Committee)*. The commission continues to engage with communication staff and agency executives to refine a process to guide changes to denominational communication plans and vehicles. Related projects include (i) agency-wide communication plan, (ii) unified style/brand guide, (iii) unified and updated web-presence and use of social media, (iv) clarification and definition of roles, responsibility, and authority within the communication departments.

5. *Inclusion & Equity*. The Commission continues conversations with OGA and PMA to create and seat a Diverse Voices Table group with equal staff representation from all agencies. This group will convene to meet regularly to review and update each other on the work of denominational inclusion and equity, including translation services. This group will consult with caucus and networks in accordance with the existing agreements, including annual consultations (see Appendix 9).

6. *Mid Council Ministries*. In ongoing collaboration and partnership with the Stated Clerk, the commission will continue efforts to (i) restructure the Office of General Assembly's Mid Council Ministries organizational chart to establish the position of Associate Clerk for Mid Council Ministries and adjust the Mid Council ministry areas under the new position, (ii) create a Mid Council Visioning Team to help explore the considerations, possibilities and opportunities of mid councils in order to maintain a robust relationship among and between presbyteries, synods and the national church, (iii) explore a pilot program for two deployed Mid Council staff in partnership with mid councils in selected regions.

7. *Seminary Relations*. In a series of conversations with the presidents and board chairs of our twelve PC(USA)-affiliated theological seminaries and with the Committee on Theological Education, it has become clear in our changing times that further discernment is needed with respect to the nature, scope and opportunities in the relationships among and between our seminaries and our denomination. These collaborative conversations are continuing with enthusiasm and openness.

8. *Financial Development Analysis*. The commission will convene a working group of stewardship/fundraising staff from all six agencies to engage in conversation about stewardship activities, including fundraising and identify areas for further collaboration and cooperation. Specific topics of engagement will include (i) clarification of what stewardship (fundraising/funds development) activities are occurring within each agency currently including cultivation, solicitation, receipt, and acknowledgment of gifts, (ii) identification of duplicated efforts and develop a strategy for cohesive and or centralized stewardship activities, (iii) review of the policies, use, and budget impacts of specific giving opportunities across the agencies, (iv) review communication and interpretation of administrative costs and use of funds received, (v) review events and activities that engage mid-councils and congregations (i.e. Kaleidoscope),

(vi) review of dedicated funds held at the Foundation and collaborative refinement of strategies, including cy-pres actions, to free-up available funds.

9. *A Corp Transition Logistics (joint activity with the All-Agency Review Committee)*. The Commission and the All-Agency Review Committee will continue their collaborative conversations, in consultation with representatives from the board of PMA and from COGA, regarding an implementation and transition plan to assist the 2018 General Assembly if the A Corp recommendation is approved, in an effort to discern and resolve as many unintended consequences as possible.

## **Conclusion**

We give thanks for the commitment and heart of the General Assembly and all of those we have engaged as they express a call for change, growth and increasing faithfulness. We give thanks for the collaborative spirit and energy we encountered throughout the denomination, especially our national staff, as we went about our work. We give thanks for God's steadfast love and guidance as we have approached this task with faith and hope. In this same faith and hope, we remain open to the Spirit's prompting through the wisdom of the wider church. We give thanks to the General Assembly and the PC(USA) for this tremendous opportunity to serve the church as the Way Forward Commission.

## APPENDICES

1. When we met. Who we are.
2. Who did we talk to.
3. The Commission's Mandate.
4. Collaborative Initiatives within Agencies.
5. Considerations about A Corp Recommendations.
6. Commission's Affirmation of Approach
7. Commission's Mid-Term Report
8. Current Structure of PC(USA)
9. Covenant of Understanding Regarding the Role and Relationship of Racial Ethnic Caucuses Within the Presbyterian Church (USA)
10. Recommendation 1.h to Amend the Manual of the General Assembly Organization for Mission

APPENDIX 1

Commission Meeting Dates and Commission Membership

**Meeting Dates of the Commission**

2016

December 11-13 In-Person Meeting (Auburn Seminary, New York)

2017

February 7 Conference Call @5:00-8:00pm Eastern  
 March 5-7 In-person Meeting (Columbia Seminary, Decatur)  
 April 18 Conference Call @5:00-8:00pm Eastern  
 May 15-17 In-person Meeting (McCormick Seminary, Chicago)  
 August 9 Conference Call @5:00-8:00pm Eastern  
 September 17-19 In-person Meeting (Louisville Seminary, Louisville)  
 October 24 Conference Call @5:00-8:00pm Eastern  
 November 16 Conference Call @5:00-8:00pm Eastern  
 December 12 Conference Call @5:00-8:00pm Eastern

2018

January 16-19 In-person Meeting (First Presbyterian Church, Seattle)  
 February 5 Conference Call @5:00-8:00pm Eastern  
 February 13 Conference Call @5:00-8:00pm Eastern  
 February 15 Conference Call @4:00-7:00pm Eastern  
 March 1 Conference Call @5:00-8:00pm Eastern  
 April 17 Conference Call @5:00-8:00pm Eastern  
 May 22 Conference Call @5:00-8:00pm Eastern

**Way Forward Commission  
 Membership**

**Class of 2018**

1. Samuel L. Bonner	BMR	56-65	New Brunswick	NE	Commissioner/2016 Way Forward AC
2. Emily Marie Williams	WFR	25-	Grace	SUN	YAAD/2016 Way Forward AC
3. Raymond (Cliff) Lyda	WMT	56-65	St. Augustine	SA	OGA Review Committee
4. Eliana Maxim	HFT	46-55	Seattle	ANW	PMA Review Committee

5. Eileen W. Lindner      WFT    56-65    Palisades                    NE      COGA Member
6. Jo Stewart              WFR    56-65    Charlotte                    MAT     PMAB Member
7. Sara Dingman          WFT    36-45    Missouri River Valley      LAK     Mid Council Staff Person
8. Julie L. Cox             WFR    46-55    New Harmony               SA      At-large
9. Mathew Eardley        WMR    26-35    Boise                        PAC     At-large
10. Mark Hostetter, Moderator WMT    56-65    New York City               NE      At-large
11. Adan A. Mairena       HMT    36-45    Philadelphia                TRI     At-large
12. Patricia Rarumangkay   AFR    26-35    National Capital            MAT     At-large

Class	FR	MR	FT	MT	A	B	H	M	N	W	Multi	D	YA
2018	4	2	3	3	1	1	2	0	0	8	0	0	3
Total	4	2	3	3	1	1	2	0	0	8	0	0	3

### Short Biographical Information – Members of the Way Forward Commission 2016

**Samuel L. Bonner** (New Brunswick Presbytery) serves as a member of Session and Co-Chair of the Finance Committee for Covenant Presbyterian Church of Trenton, New Jersey. He is also a member of the presbytery Task Force on Mass Incarceration. Sam is a commissioned national bank examiner with large organization risk analysis expertise.

**Julie L. Cox** (New Harmony Presbytery) serves as Associate Executive Presbyter & Associate Stated Clerk. Her portfolio includes resourcing New Harmony's Camping, Congregational Development, Education & Nurture, Mission, Worship & Spiritual Formation ministries, Committee on Preparation for Ministry, Committee on Ministry, and its Program & Administrative councils. Julie has served as Clerk of Session at First Presbyterian Church, Hartsville, South Carolina, and will be teaching children's Sunday school this autumn.

**Sara Dingman** (Missouri River Valley Presbytery) serves the eight presbyteries of the Synod of Lincoln Trails as their transitional synod executive. Prior to this Sara served as an interim executive presbyter in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. Ordained a teaching elder in 1998, Sara has served the 21st century church in a variety of congregations and contexts.

**Mathew Eardley** (Boise Presbytery) serves on Session and as chair of the Mission Committee at First Presbyterian Church in Boise, Idaho. He also serves on the Committee on Ministry and Financial Review Committee for the Presbytery of Boise. Mathew fills his days working for Jitasa, a company that provides bookkeeping and accounting services to the nonprofit sector.

**Mark Hostetter, Moderator** (New York City Presbytery) is the Associate Pastor for Mission to the Corporate World at The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York, and for the past 20 years has also been CEO of a large money management firm. Mark is the current board chair of Auburn Theological Seminary and Strategic Planning chair of New York Theological Seminary, recent board chair of the Ghost Ranch Governing Board, strategic consultant to the Presbyterian Foundation, and has just been elected to the board of directors/trustees of Montreat Conference Center.

**Eileen W. Lindner** (Presbytery of the Palisades) is Pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Tenafly and serves the Presbytery as a member of the Committee on Ministry and as President of the Board of Trustees. She was Editor of *The Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches 2000-2013*.

**Cliff Lyda** (St. Augustine Presbytery) has recently retired as a teaching elder and has relocated from greater Chicago to Gainesville, FL. While in the Presbytery of Chicago he served as moderator, and as a leader in renewal and restructuring efforts in the presbytery. Most recently he served as moderator of the Review Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

**Adan A. Mairena** (Presbytery of Philadelphia) serves as the Pastor of the West Kensington Ministry and the Yeadon Presbyterian Church. Adan is also a member of the P.C.U.S.A. Urban Ministry Team and was a Director of the Board of Pensions for the denomination. Adan serves on Presbytery committees, local non-profit boards and collaborates with city government, law enforcement, and other agencies to address quality of life issues in Philadelphia.

**Eliana Maxim** (Seattle Presbytery) has served as the Associate Executive Presbyter for the Presbytery of Seattle for the past 7 years. Her primary focus areas include church redevelopment and revitalization, new and immigrant worshiping communities and missional partnerships. Eliana serves on the PCUSA Hispanic/Latino National Caucus as vice moderator. She has previously served on the 220 General Assembly's Committee on the Belhar Confession, the Committee on Church Wide Conversation on Race, Racism, Ethnicity and Ethnocentrism and the 221 General Assembly's Review Committee for the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

**Patricia Rarumangkay** (National Capital Presbytery) is a Ruling Elder at Emmanuel Indonesian Presbyterian Church in Rockville, MD where she has served as the Mission Committee coordinator and currently serves as co-coordinator of the Education Committee. She is part of her presbytery's Immigrant Ministry Network (IMN), and she is passionate about helping to

develop programs and initiatives that will further empower the young adult and new immigrant groups. She currently works at an international financial institution based in Washington D.C.

**Jo Stewart** (Charlotte Presbytery) is a member of Myers Park Presbyterian Church, Charlotte, North Carolina, where she has served in numerous roles over the years - including chair of the Global Relations Team. She just ended a four-year term on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) and was vice-chair for the last two years; as vice-chair, she also served as the PMAB representative for the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly. She is currently a member of the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program Board. Jo is retired from Towers Perrin (now Willis Towers Watson) where she was a Principal and Senior Consultant.

**Emily Marie Williams** (Grace Presbytery) is a junior Intercultural Communications major at Schreiner University in Kerrville, TX. She has served on a plethora of committees and planning teams at her church, presbytery, and synod level. She hopes to one day go to seminary, be a journalist, or do public relations for a National Hockey League team.

## APPENDIX 2

## Consultations & Conversations

Broad Surveys on Needs and Directions:

January 2017

July 2017

Seminary Presidents, Board Chairs and Faculty  
Committee on Theological Education

Presbyterian Camp and Conference Center Association  
National Conference Centers: Montreat, Ghost Ranch, Stony Point

Staff of all six national agencies

COGA

PMAB (and its Governance Task Force)

Board Chairs & Chief Executives of the Six National Agencies  
Previous Stated Clerks and Previous General Assembly Moderators

Ecumenical Partners

United Church of Christ

The Episcopal Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

United Methodist Church

Mid-Council

Polity Conference 2016, 2017

Mid Council Leaders Survey July 2017

NEXT Church

National Hispanic/Latino-a Presbyterian Caucus  
National Black Presbyterian Caucus  
National Caucus of Korean Presbyterian Churches  
National Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus  
Native American Consulting Committee  
National Asian Presbyterian Council  
Advisory Committee Racial Ethnic Concerns

Presbyterian Women

**The 222nd General Assembly (2016) recommends that the Co-Moderators of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), together with the Moderator and Vice Moderator of the 221st General Assembly (2014), name a Way Forward Commission to study and identify a vision for the structure and function of the General Assembly agencies of the PC(USA). That vision shall take into account the ministries of PMA and OGA, but shall not be bound by the current configuration of those ministries, except where mandated by the church's Constitution. The mandate of the commission is to engage/contract a qualified, examination team that may include some or all of the All Agency Review team, with the requisite skills and abilities to assess institutional performance, both internally among the agencies and externally as they interface with the congregations. This examination team is charged with conducting a comprehensive, detailed analysis that will provide clearly detailed, measurable recommendations for improvements to the commission for implementation by the agencies. The commission shall further describe and implement a General-Assembly level staffing pattern that will accomplish its vision. The commission shall be guided in its development and articulation of this vision and structure by Reformed ecclesiology as expressed in our Constitution.**

**In the discharge of its responsibilities, the commission shall:**

- 1. Integrate the recommendations provided by the All Agency Review Committee, the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly.**
  - a. All recommendations should be reviewed by the Commission to determine which should be implemented by the appropriate agencies.**
  - b. The Commission will monitor implementation across the Agencies**
- 2. Visit with and explore**
  - a. the best practices of other national church bodies,**
  - b. the best practices of corporations and non-profits, as deemed helpful.**
- 3. Consult with**
  - a. seminary faculty and presidents,**
  - b. presbytery and synod leaders.**
- 4. Explore other resources they deem helpful and prudent**

**And shall be empowered to:**

- 1. take such administrative actions in both OGA and PMA as may move the General Assembly staff in the direction of its vision;**
- 2. recommend to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) such changes in Standing Rules as may move the church in the direction of its vision;**

3. recommend to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) any amendments to the *Book of Order* as may move the church in the direction of its vision.
4. explore the best way for Shared Services to serve these agencies.

The commission shall be comprised of no more than 12 voting members (with a quorum to be a simple majority of 7) at least 2 of whom should be members of the 2016 Assembly Committee on the Way Forward, with every effort made to include an advisory delegate from that committee. The commission membership will include a representative from both the PMA Review Committee and the OGA Review Committee, a representative from both the current Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) and the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), and at least one mid council staff person.

We agree with the PMA Review Committee that the commission consist of the following:

1. The commission shall be made up of ruling and teaching elders with broad geographic, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity, a total of at most 12 commissioners.
2. The PMA and OGA will each appoint a staff person to serve as staff support for the commission.
3. The commission's work will be informed by other church wide conversations on the future of the church and its structure.
4. The assembly will allocate sufficient resources so that this commission can meet regularly and consult with other PC(USA) constituents, as well as others who could provide insight into the process. There should be at least two face to face meetings in one year and with as many electronic meetings as deemed necessary.
5. Recommendations for any missional and structural changes will be brought to the 223rd General Assembly (2018) in compliance with all Standing Rules of the General Assembly.

### ***Rationale***

The business before this committee consistently called for study of our current structure, expressed concern for the culture and administration of the PMA and OGA bodies, and posited a hope for change that will make us a more efficient, inclusive, culturally sensitive, and visionary denomination.

We appreciate the substantial work of the PMA and OGA review committees and those who developed and concurred with the amendments that have been brought to our committee. As we pursued responses to what was proposed, we recognized that it would be better to first identify the purposes and immediate foci that will govern our next steps and then address issues of structure and staffing.

We have limited the size of the commission in response to studies, and in consideration of our own process, which indicate that the decision-making abilities of committees is diminished as size increases. The inclusion of a YAAD is a direct response to the insightful, articulate input our committee has received from its YAAD participants. We believe their involvement is an important component in achieving greater inclusivity and broadened perspective as we make our way forward.

Through collaborative conversations and internal initiatives, many opportunities for improvement have been undertaken by the national agencies and encouraged by the Commission, living into the Commission's affirmation that we as a church must live into a sense of urgency that we must move to a new openness, a new way, and in words and actions promote a sense that we are one body in Christ, collaborating not only for the benefit of one agency alone, but for the whole church and its ministries.

### **Presbyterian Foundation**

- With its financial support to the church of approximately \$60 million per year and its experienced staff, the Foundation is exploring how their financial counsel, better amplified, could provide substantially more support to the denomination.
- Project Regeneration — working with churches and presbyteries on sale of excess property, to use the proceeds from such sales to better fund mission that the congregation or presbytery believes is worthwhile. The Foundation, in conjunction with PILP, is working to develop a more robust collaborative infrastructure to expand this project to support Mid Council challenges regarding real estate.
- Work together with the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program to complete the transfer of the remaining areas of the Church Loan Program to PILP for purposes of streamlining the loan process, reducing duplicative efforts, reducing costs, and improving response time, including implementation of any needed logistical changes involving loan funding sources.
- Continued work with all agencies to discern a way to ensure a comprehensive, clearly defined communication, contact and interaction objectives with denomination's Mid Councils, based on periodic planning sessions with Mid Councils and documented assessment of needs and risks. Assist Mid Councils in developing critical funding objectives based on Mid Council identified financial needs, and encourage mechanisms to promote "one body in Christ" collaboration, cooperation and joint approaches.
- Continued collaborative conversation to clarify the several agencies' activities in fundraising, and to develop additional efficiencies resulting in a streamlined process that reduces duplication, improves responsiveness, and leads to expanded ministry.
- Continued collaborative conversation regarding the opportunities for coordination of information on constituents currently maintained separately by each agency (recognizing that there exists legal and regulatory limitations, particularly in the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation).

### **Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program**

- As PILP has been servicing and administering the Church Loan Program for 17 years, for purposes of streamlining the loan process, reducing duplicative efforts, reducing costs, and

improving response time, the remaining areas of this ministry (mainly Board oversight and policy determination and all loan and building grant approval) will be transferred to PILP. PILP will work together with the Presbyterian Foundation to complete this transfer of mission, including implementation of any needed logistical changes involving loan funding sources.

- Continued work with all agencies to discern a way to ensure a comprehensive, clearly defined communication, contact and interaction objectives with denomination's Mid Councils, based on periodic planning sessions with Mid Councils and documented assessment of needs and risks. Assist Mid Councils in developing critical funding objectives based on Mid Council identified financial needs, and encourage mechanisms to promote "one body in Christ" collaboration, cooperation and joint approaches.
- Explore developing a unit able to assist Mid Councils as they work to manage their physical assets.
- Continued collaborative conversation regarding the opportunities for coordination of information on constituents currently maintained separately by each agency (recognizing that there exists legal and regulatory limitations, particularly in the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation).

### **Presbyterian Publishing Corporation**

- Complete the consolidation of Congregational Ministries Publishing (CMP) currently housed in PMA into PPC, as recommended by the 2009 CMP Study and encouraged by the General Assembly, with the goal of CMP becoming a self-sustaining part of the Publishing enterprise within three years. This also includes the Spanish and Korean curriculum publishing programs which will continue to receive funding indefinitely as the General Assembly mandates.
- Explore the consolidation of marketing, ordering and publishing processes currently in multiple agencies offering publishing services.
- Explore establishing formal, periodic meetings with Mid Councils for the express purpose of providing publishing/communications assistance responsive to the needs of the denomination.

### **The Board of Pensions**

- Continue follow-up analysis of the 2017 initiative (offering more "a la carte" benefit packages) for effectiveness and further possibilities, reflecting the importance of this issue to congregations and Mid Councils who reflect the concern that existing packages/policies may be problematic for encouraging new worshipping communities.
- Continued work with all agencies to discern a way to ensure a comprehensive, clearly defined communication, contact and interaction objectives with denomination's Mid Councils, based on periodic planning sessions with Mid Councils and documented assessment of needs and risks. Assist Mid Councils in developing critical funding objectives based on Mid Council

identified financial needs, and encourage mechanisms to promote “one body in Christ” collaboration, cooperation and joint approaches.

- Continued collaborative conversation to clarify the several agencies’ activities in fundraising, and to develop additional efficiencies resulting in a streamlined process that reduces duplication, improves responsiveness, and leads to expanded ministry.
- Continued collaborative conversation regarding the opportunities for coordination of information on constituents currently maintained separately by each agency (recognizing that there exists legal and regulatory limitations, particularly in the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation).

### **Presbyterian Mission Agency**

- Complete the consolidation of Congregational Ministries Publishing (CMP) currently housed in PMA into PPC, as recommended by the 2009 CMP Study and encouraged by the General Assembly, with the goal of CMP becoming a self-sustaining part of the Publishing enterprise within three years. This also includes the Spanish and Korean curriculum publishing programs which will continue to receive funding indefinitely as the General Assembly mandates.
- Encourage and affirm the work of the Governance Task Force and the PMA Board to analyze and improve PMA effectiveness through proposed changes to the PMA board composition and PMA board organization.
- Continued work with all agencies to discern a way to ensure a comprehensive, clearly defined communication, contact and interaction objectives with denomination’s Mid Councils, based on periodic planning sessions with Mid Councils and documented assessment of needs and risks. Assist Mid Councils in developing critical funding objectives based on Mid Council identified financial needs, and encourage mechanisms to promote “one body in Christ” collaboration, cooperation and joint approaches.
- Continued collaborative conversation to clarify the several agencies’ activities in fundraising, and to develop additional efficiencies resulting in a streamlined process that reduces duplication, improves responsiveness, and leads to expanded ministry.
- Continued collaborative conversation regarding the opportunities for coordination of information on constituents currently maintained separately by each agency (recognizing that there exists legal and regulatory limitations, particularly in the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation).
- Continued collaborative conversation with all six agencies regarding the missional use and hospitality at the Presbyterian Center, 100 Witherspoon Street in Louisville.

### **Office of General Assembly**

- See Recommendations.
- Continued work with all agencies to discern a way to ensure a comprehensive, clearly defined communication, contact and interaction objectives with denomination’s Mid Councils,

based on periodic planning sessions with Mid Councils and documented assessment of needs and risks. Assist Mid Councils in developing critical funding objectives based on Mid Council identified financial needs, and encourage mechanisms to promote “one body in Christ” collaboration, cooperation and joint approaches.

## Additional Considerations and Rationales for Recommendations:

Section F-1.0404 of the Form of Government urges that, “as it participates in God’s mission”, the church should seek “a new openness to see both the possibilities and the perils of its institutional forms in order to ensure the faithfulness and usefulness of these forms to God’s activities in the world.” This openness to the work of the Spirit has inspired this recommendation concerning A Corp. A Corp itself is a direct successor (along with the Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the “Foundation”) to the original 18th century corporation of our denomination. Its articles of incorporation direct A Corp “to be an integrated auxiliary and a part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and to act as the principal corporation which the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has caused to be formed pursuant to . . . the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to receive, hold and transfer property and to facilitate the management of its corporate affairs, as affirmed and declared by the 198th General Assembly (1986) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).”

In this role, “A Corp” holds almost all of the property and assets of the denomination not held by the Foundation. (Assets held by the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (the “Board of Pensions”) are not denominational assets, but assets for the benefit of members of the benefit plans offered by that Board.) In general, the Foundation holds long-term assets. “A Corp” holds beneficial interests in some Foundation assets, handles the denomination’s current operating funds, and owns the denomination’s operating assets (such as 100 Witherspoon Street in Louisville, Kentucky). “A Corp” provides the secular support—such as employment, contracting, and handling of funds—needed by the Presbyterian Mission Agency (“PMA”) and the Office of the General Assembly (“OGA”), which are unincorporated ecclesiastical entities (as is the General Assembly). “A Corp” also works with the four other PC(USA) agencies: the Foundation, the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Corporation, Inc., and Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.

There is a great deal of history behind “A Corp.” But we believe its appropriate role is clear. The General Assembly, directly representing all the people and councils of the church, should discern and announce theological positions, define mission, set mission priorities, and approve targets (both of income and expense) to accomplish those things. The six agencies of the General Assembly should implement these high-level decisions and support the people and councils of the church in carrying them out. “A Corp” should help support the agencies in these efforts, particularly the two most ecclesiastical of them, PMA and OGA.

We believe the governance of “A Corp” should reflect this role. Its governance structure—its board of directors and officers—currently does not:

- All “A Corp.” board members are from the PMA board of directors—in effect, the boards are the same
- The “A Corp.” board currently has 40 voting members, far too large to carry out its duties effectively. While over time, PMA expects to reduce the PMA board to 20 members, and

therefore the “A Corp.” board would be reduced similarly if our recommendations were rejected, PMA’s scope of mission responsibilities makes a 20 person board more appropriate for it, and a smaller board than that would be more appropriate for “A Corp.”

- .The Executive Director of PMA is automatically the President of “A Corp.”, and therefore has to have a divided focus, with a potentially different skill set required.
- There is confusion between PMA’s mission role and the operation of “A Corp.” by PMA’s board members.
- There is distrust over whether services provided by “A Corp.” are provided fairly for the benefit of other agencies, particularly OGA, because of this confusion.
- The opportunity for coordination of agency activity through “A Corp.” has not been realized.

The recommendation represents a better way to govern “A Corp.” It would allow “A Corp” to carry out its corporate functions to support the agencies of the church, not to control those agencies’ own missions, or favor only one agency’s preferences. “A Corp” would receive no additional powers from these changes in board composition and selection of president. (“A Corp” would, for example, still have no authority to prescribe mission for PMA.) Importantly, however, these changes would eliminate the confusion between “A Corp” and PMA. They would allow PMA to focus on mission. They would allow “A Corp” to manage itself efficiently. They would reduce mistrust over the fair provision of “A Corp” services to agencies, particularly as between OGA and PMA. They would provide a better platform for inter-agency cooperation. These changes would also not be unduly disruptive. They would not require any change in the ownership of any assets or liabilities. They would not require—although they could lead to—any personnel changes other than a new determination of who should be the President of “A Corp.” They would not preclude other changes that this Committee or the Way Forward Commission might want to recommend or pursue in other areas.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. If you had to write a “problem statement” for “A Corp.”, what would it be?

We did not approach “A Corp.” with the preconceived notion that it was a problem or embodied a problem. In listening to different perspectives across the denomination (and particularly from its six principal agencies), however, it became clear that a central question is “how can the agencies (and the General Assembly) work together better to accomplish the ends of the church”? Viewing “A Corp.” as an entity with a designated role in disbursing money, managing personnel, and providing services in implementing the mission not just of PMA, but of OGA and the denomination as a whole—sort of a “utility” for some of that work—the logical next question was to ask “how can ‘A Corp.’ reflect and carry out the desire that we work better together”? The current recommendation is one answer to that question.

2. Why not create an entity separate from PMA?

“A Corp.” *is* separate from PMA. Neither PMA nor OGA has a *corporate* form: PMA is an ecclesiastical mission entity and OGA is an ecclesiastical governance support entity. To the extent PMA or OGA needs to do something secular (such as enter into a contract), “A Corp.” does that for them.

3. Would this proposal change the ownership of any funds or property?

No. The all the funds and property owned by “A Corp.” (or any other agency or entity) would still be owned by them. This proposal would not change that.

4. Would this proposal require the expenditure of additional money for staff for “A Corp.”?

No. Whether the board of directors of “A Corp.” believes the corporation needs more or less staff would remain a question for that board, as it is today.

5. Would this proposal mean that the Executive Director of PMA would no longer be the President of “A Corp.”?

Maybe, but not necessarily. The proposal envisions that the Executive Director of “A Corp.” would no longer *automatically* be the President of “A Corp.” He or she could be elected to that position by the board of directors of “A Corp.”, but would not be required to seek that role. Nor would the board of directors of “A Corp.” be required to elect the Executive Director of PMA the President of “A Corp.”, even if that person wanted to be considered for the job.

6. Wouldn't this proposal lead to fights between “A Corp.” and the Foundation?

No. Disputes arise from time to time with respect to gifts made by donors to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in which there can be disagreement about where the donor wanted the gift to go, or for what purpose. These problems (for which there are now good processes for resolution) do not occur because of how the board of any agency (or “A Corp.”) is structured. Because this proposal would not change *any* of the current ownership of funds and property as between “A Corp.” and the Foundation, there is no reason to believe it would lead to new disputes of this kind.

7. To whom would the Executive Director of PMA report—the A Corp. board or the PMA board?

The proposed changes would not change the reporting structure inside any other agency. The Executive Director of PMA would continue to report to the PMA board.

8. Would the current PMA board remain a board, or become a committee (similar to COGA)?

The proposed changes would not change the PMA board, or its current responsibilities. We expect that the PMA board would continue to propose budgets for the work of PMA, for example. It is important to understand that the “A Corp.” board today is not the PMA board. It is—and should act as, whether it always does—a different board than the PMA board. At the moment the two boards just happen to have, by rule embodied in the bylaws of “A Corp.”, *exactly the same members*. This proposal would change the membership of the “A Corp.” board and eliminate the automatic appointment of the Executive Director of PMA as the President of “A Corp.” While we believe this can have great benefits, and does require care in the details, it is not fundamentally a complex idea.

9. Won't the new Executive Director of PMA feel like he or she has “lost power” by not automatically being the President of “A Corp.”

We seriously doubt it. Persons involved in the current Executive Director search have told us that candidates are more concerned about being able to focus more intensely on mission, rather than having to split their focus across a mission agency and the details of a corporation managing funds and support services.

10. Why not just make the informal “Chairs and Chiefs” meetings of the agencies into the board of “A Corp.”?

We think that it is not good governance (and inconsistent with our polity) to make employees of the agencies (the “chiefs”) automatically board members of “A Corp.” We also think that, while it may well make sense for the heads of the other agency governing boards (the “chairs”) to serve on the “A Corp.” board, that decision should be left to the governing boards of those agencies. They may prefer to focus the efforts of their own chairs differently. In addition, we think it is a good idea to provide for a few “at large” members on any board.

11. Doesn't this recommendation add another layer of complexity to an already complex system?

We think not. It would reduce the size of the “A Corp.” board. It would decrease the barriers to coordination among all the agencies. It would also not (for example) add any *new* agency to the denomination.

12. Who would fund “A Corp.” under the new proposed governance structure?

The source of funding of “A Corp.” would be the same under the proposed structure as it is today.

13. Why is “A Corp.” more important than the other national entities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?

It is not *more* important—it is just important. We are focusing it on it in this proposal, but others are focusing equally hard on the other agencies and entities of the denomination.

14. How does this proposal fit with the other proposals that will be made by the Way Forward Commission and the All Agency Review Committee?

To the extent we know right now what those proposals are likely to be, we do not see any conflict between this proposal and any of them. The All Agency Review Committee believes that this is a time for the church to remember the directive in Section F-1.0404 of the Form of Government that, “[a]s it participates in God’s mission”, the church should seek “a new openness to see both the possibilities and the perils of its institutional forms in order to ensure the faithfulness and usefulness of these forms to God’s activities in the world.” The Committee also believes that, as its 2010 predecessor noted, “collaboration among agencies is a priority . . . .” Similarly, the Way Forward Commission is committed to “*identify[ing] a vision for the structure and function of*” *the church’s agencies, as it was directed to do by the General Assembly, and* not to “be bound by the current configuration of those ministries, except where mandated by the church’s Constitution” in “provid[ing] clearly detailed, measurable recommendations for improvements . . . for implementation by the agencies.”

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY WAY FORWARD COMMISSION**

**AFFIRMATION OF APPROACH  
MARCH 2017**

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are twelve servants of the church established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the PC(USA) to discern the way forward for the PC(USA) in the 21st century, in collaboration with the All Agency Review Committee and the 2020 Vision Team.

The Way Forward Commission strives to model the change it seeks, in collaboration and communication with both elected representatives and staff throughout the denomination. The commission intends to act swiftly, creatively, and boldly in the desire to take advantage of this unique God-given opportunity to help the church once again return its full focus to the work of the church in the world. The time is now.

We are not starting from scratch in this task. Most recently, resources, such as the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) survey, the Moderators' and NEXT Church Conversations, the periodic agency reviews, and the agency strategic plans, have all pointed to societal realities that confront the church.

We also reflect the belief that this work of identity and structure, although important, must not distract or divert us from our call for Christian witness and service.

The commission unanimously adopts this affirmation in the hope of engaging the church in conversation about a common set of underlying assumptions and values. It is intended to provide insight into the approach and values of the commission as we engage with the church in our continuing discernment to study and identify a vision for the structure and function of the General Assembly agencies of the PC(USA).

**CALL TO ACTION AND INVITATION TO COLLABORATION**

We strongly affirm the good work happening in our church, and the dedication and hard work of all those in ministry at the national level. We firmly believe that the values reflected in this affirmation might well apply to all national agencies and staff and recommend consideration for their adoption and application. We recognize that we stand at a Kairos moment both in our church and in the world and are called to be both bold and creative in this next season of Christian witness and service.

This is a time for radical improvement, collaborative creativity, and dramatic innovation. We are all invited to ask ourselves and one another:

- What are our strengths as a denomination?
- What does the present moment call us to do and to be?
- How can we better help congregations and local ministries thrive and grow?
- What are we not doing or able to do differently?

We have engaged the agencies and groups within the church and encouraged them to collaborate with us about how to best utilize the time-limited opportunity that the General Assembly's empowerment of the Way Forward Commission uniquely provides.

For consideration:

- What can the commission help you accomplish that you cannot implement on your own?
- How can the spirit of urgency reflected in the General Assembly's action creating the commission be harnessed to assist you to overcome inertia that hampers helpful change?
- As the commission discerns its recommendations for structural change in the national denomination, what might be some approaches that help to ensure our acting as one body in Christ even as we start off from the perspectives and bias inherent to our individual roles?

## **OUR CURRENT CONTEXT**

- Now more than ever, the church must continue to play an important prophetic role for justice and service to the marginalized.
- The growing diversity of our denomination presents a vital new landscape for ministry and witness.
- At least for the present, overall PC(USA) membership—like all mainline denominations—is declining.
- Funding sources increasingly prefer designated giving to particular ministries.
- Unrestricted funding for the national church will continue to decrease, with resulting complications for administrative costs.
- National staff will continue to decrease under status quo.
- Planning for financial sustainability for ministries will need to be a higher priority.

## **VALUES THAT GUIDE OUR WORK**

- Our Reformed theology and heritage offers us gifts—among other things, we are connectional, ever-reforming, and committed to engagement with the world.
- What we do and how we do it must reflect on the realities of our context, culture, and societal needs.
- We are committed to a denominational structure that nurtures and empowers all voices to Christian witness and action.
- We recognize that our fundamental core is rooted in our identity as a church; it is our ecclesial identity that informs what we do, how we do it, and how we speak of our work.

- We undertake our work with a posture of humility and invite the same of all working with our national agencies. Understanding our roles, listening with an open mind, and maintaining trust are central to our call.
- We support integrated inclusiveness and support for nontraditional voices—the growing center of our church.
- We believe in the value of hospitality as a means of extending welcome to all.
- We welcome an openness to change and a willingness to try new things.
- We invite all to live into our connectional church polity, avoiding compartmentalization and modeling (in our actions and in our recommendations) the collaborative working approach we want to see within and among our national agencies. We are one body in Christ, and our loyalty is to Christ and the PC(USA) rather than to a particular agency.
- We commit to frequent and real-time communication delivered in multiple languages.
- We promise to be available and to respond promptly (within a day or two) to questions and concerns. We may not always agree or have the resources to satisfactorily address individual concerns, but we will listen and answer.
- We recognize local ministry level is most qualified and informed about ministry, and must be empowered and included from the outset in all decision-making while affirming the significant role of witness in the national and regional structures of the church.
- Ministry and mission must drive decision-making. The role of support services is to help get it done, not to serve as a stumbling block.
- We seek evaluations based on how much we help, not on how much we do.
- We approach all suggestions with the belief that there is always a kernel of truth that can lead to improvement.
- We are committed to a structure that provides flexibility and non-rigidity.
- We seek to outsource functions where the church does not uniquely have expertise.

God calls the PC(USA) to a faithful and exciting future. In the bold, confident hope of God's grace, we journey together toward that future. We solicit your prayers for this movement of the Spirit.

**Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**  
**General Assembly Way Forward Commission**

Mid-Term Report  
June 27, 2017

*I thank my God every time I remember you;  
Constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you,  
Because of your sharing in the gospel  
from the first day until now.  
Philippians 1:3–5*

These words of the Epistle to the church at Philippi might well have been spoken by each of us, the members of the Way Forward Commission. Individually and corporately we hold deep and abiding affection for the faithfulness of all the members and congregations of the PC(USA). As we have taken up our responsibilities, we have had before us the urgent calling of our church under the Lordship of Christ to proclaim the Good News in a weary world. With great joy, hope, and confidence in God's steadfast grace, we have begun to dream of the 21st century church we see emerging.

We have not understood our charge to be one of finding ways to manage decline, or to tinker with existing structures in the hope of assuring institutional survival. Rather, encouraged by our calling through the voice of the General Assembly, the counsel of the Stated Clerk, and words of admonition and encouragement from hundreds of Presbyterians, we have set a bolder course. We believe we are a changing church in a changing world and that our ways of work and witness must reflect the dynamism of our contemporary lives. Midway into our task we are eager to share our thoughts and progress with Presbyterians throughout the church. We covet your thoughtful reflection, feedback, and prayer for our continued effort.

For we believe "... *the One who began a good work among you will bring it to completion ... in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.*" (Phil. 1:6–7)

### **Coordination with Agencies and Committees**

We continue to gather, review, and incorporate the abundant information available from agencies and ministries throughout the church. Recognizing that we have been given a unique opportunity to reform our church for more effective service, and reflecting our desire to act as one body in Christ in common mission, the Way Forward Commission has taken the following steps:

- *Affirmation of Approach.* How we relate to each other within our church and the attitudes of our corporate "culture" is critical in setting the tone, approach, and common underlying values

of the national church as we go about our work. The commission has issued its discernment in an “Affirmation of Approach” that can be found at <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/way-forward-commission-affirmation-approach/>.

- *Agency Initiatives.* We have established ongoing conversations with all six national agencies to mutually identify and implement recommended improvements. A summary of these initiatives is being compiled and will be released as soon as it is available.
- *Coordination with All-Agency Review and 2020 Vision.* We continue our work in conjunction and conversation with the two committees established by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to examine the identity, function, and structure of our denomination for our current reality.

## Major Themes Emerging

*“Our primary mission as church is  
to transform the world for the good in the name of Jesus Christ.”*  
Jan Edmiston, Co-Moderator of the 222nd General Assembly (2016)

In our work of discernment, these seven areas are the first identified in need of attention and revisioning as we think about an adaptive and effective structural change for the agencies of the General Assembly.

1. *Congregational Focus.* With the strong conviction that the local church is the locus of ministry for the PC(USA) but “is not of itself a sufficient form of church” (*Book of Order*, G-1.0101) (yet congregational support is an essential priority of the national church), we believe all six agencies of the denomination are presently considering innovative ways to collaborate both with each other and with mid councils to provide local churches with adequate, contextual support that is nimble and responsive. Although this can take many forms, what is central and should be central to our denomination is to respond to the question: How can we best partner with churches in order for them to fully live into their missional call in their communities?
2. *Mission Priority.* At the forefront of our discernment is an appreciation for the faithfulness and hard work of our national staff in our common service to Jesus Christ and the PC(USA), making a profound difference in the church and the world. In strengthening the missional aspect of that call, innovative models of mission delivery, not corporate or administrative responsibilities, should be the central, critical role of the national agencies. We believe that the Presbyterian Mission Agency especially, has been saddled for far too long with corporate responsibilities that create barriers for gifted staff and hinder their full focus on mission and coordination with congregations, mid councils, and global ecumenical partners. Recognizing the importance of these requirements as well as the stewardship obligations inherent in the funding and work of the national church, we are striving for the most transformative methods of mission engagement.

3. *Diversity and Leadership.* While denominational demographics continue to reflect the traditional majorities of our past, the full diversity represented in our culture is central to who we are as a church. With regard to identity, mission, and growth, we must incorporate that diversity into our function and structure. We need to prepare leaders for the church we will be, and consider innovative ways of providing leadership development events, programs, and training. This includes nurturing leaders—ordained ministers, ruling elders, and commissioned ruling elders—of emerging minorities. It also includes a willingness to encourage and support alternative pastoral leadership patterns best suited to the church we are becoming.

4. *Mid Council Relationships.* Presbyteries have been described as the linchpins of our denomination. They partner directly with congregations particularly in times of transition, redevelopment, or crisis. And yet we are witnessing a sea change in the structure, staffing, funding, and responsibilities of these councils. The role of synods is also in transition. There is a lack of resources affecting paid staff at the presbytery level and a reconfigured mid council ministry department within the Office of General Assembly. The national church must find additional tangible ways to partner with presbyteries and synods in support of congregations.

5. *Functioning as “Church.”* The church is called to speak Gospel truth to the world today. Nonetheless, we perceive a lack of clarity in both who represents the church in public witness on behalf of the denomination and in who serves as a central voice within the denomination. The present ambiguity is not an issue about an individual but rather an issue of structure, roles, and responsibilities. We are reviewing the Stated Clerk’s responsibilities and clarification of how this office, the highest elected office required by our *Book of Order*, speaks on behalf of the denomination, and also examining the roles of the voices of the General Assembly Moderator(s) and various agency executives. Additionally, the lack of accountability of all parts of the church to our ecclesiastical center and the need to affirm the primacy of the church as “church” (above functions, operations, executive, support, etc.) is leading us to further examine the potential role of the Stated Clerk. We seek to strengthen this function while still maintaining our reformed polity of “shared power ... exercised jointly” (*Book of Order*, F-3.0208).

6. *Reconceptualized Administrative Support.* We believe, as noted in the second theme, that there can and should be better ways to deliver corporate and administrative services that positions the functions as supportive to the missional components of the national agencies. In moving forward in our discernment, there are questions that need to be examined. For instance: What administrative services can and should be centralized across all agencies; what is the most efficient and effective way of delivering corporate and administrative services; should some functions be outsourced; and how can we make these services accountable to the end user?

7. *Effective Communication.* We have observed a lack of cohesion in branding, voice, and consistency among the myriad of communication channels throughout the denomination. The most obvious example is the denominational websites and their many iterations. There

exists a desire for clear, user-friendly, and varied platforms, including everything from print to social media, to communicate the work the PC(USA) is doing locally and around the world.

### **Feedback Invitation**

And, now we would like to hear from you to determine if we are on the right track.

- What rings true for you in the themes we've identified?
- What is missing in these themes?
- We've presented the themes in one order, attempting some prioritization; what changes would you make? What theme or themes should take priority?
- If you could give the commission one piece of advice as we continue our work, what would it be?

You can respond to these questions and provide other comments at the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WFCMid-termreport>. The link will be open from July 1–15, 2017.

We hope to hear from you!

In closing, we share a few verses from a poem that provided inspiration to the commission at our May meeting, and we hope it also resonates with you.

*This is no time to reminisce of the past.*

*It is a time to reflect on the present.*

*This is no time to think of what could have been.*

*It's a time to plan what is to be.*

*This is no time to be haunted by doubt.*

*It is a time to be uplifted by hope.*

—Martin L. Yonts, "A Meditation on Life"

With great hope, we will continue to move forward. We ask for your continued prayers that we can all see the new thing God is doing.

APPENDIX 8            Current Structure of PC(USA)

[OGA to insert existing approved description]

## APPENDIX 9

*From Presbyterian Mission Agency – Manual of Operations \_\_\_\_\_ Appendix 14*

### **Covenant of Understanding Regarding the Role and Relationship of Racial Ethnic Caucuses within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

Racial Ethnic Caucuses, in varying forms, have been a significant part of the history and ethos of the Presbyterian Church at least since the 1800s. The first known recorded caucus was organized in New York City by black clergy in 1856. The caucus was organized to advocate for racial justice in the church and community, and to maximize black participation in the life and mission of the Presbyterian Church, along with other goals. (Adapted from a paper by Dr. Gayraud S. Wilmore, entitled *The Black Presbyterian Caucuses-Passing on the Heritage – 1998*)

As our church and society became more racially diverse, the development of racial ethnic caucuses increased in the church during the early 1970s to include Asian, Hispanic, Native American, and more recently Middle-Eastern Presbyterians. These caucuses had an advocacy and programmatic role, strengthened by a working relationship with the General Assembly, through its Racial Ethnic Office, as well as other judicatories (now mid councils). In many instances, the Synod was a primary link for the caucuses in relating to and working with their constituencies at the congregational level.

With the continuing changes taking place within the life of the denomination, the racial ethnic caucuses are experiencing a serious sense of having lost both their relationship and a clear role within the church. While the caucuses are related to the General Assembly through the Presbyterian Mission Agency and its Office on Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries, there is no clear understanding of what that relationship means and the expectations of that relationship.

Since the reunion in 1983, which created the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), there has been a lack of clarity about both the advocacy and missional role of the caucuses and their relationship to the denomination at all levels.

#### **PURPOSE OF "THE COVENANT OF UNDERSTANDING"**

This "Covenant of Understanding" is an attempt to reestablish a proactive, trusting relationship built upon collaboration, shared beliefs, complementary visions, and mutual respect. It is also the intent of the Covenant to bring clarity to the appropriate role and relationship of racial ethnic caucuses within the PC(USA), particularly with the General Assembly, the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and Mid Councils at this time in our changing life together.

It is the desire of the racial ethnic caucuses to partner with the PC(USA) in its commitment to "guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution."

(F-1.0403).

#### **BOOK OF ORDER REFERENCES RE: RACIAL ETHNIC CAUCUSES SINCE REUNION**

1. **ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT** (*Book of Order 2013-2015*) – Article 8.2 – 8.3 Racial Ethnic Representation, Participation and Organizations – includes the following statement: "Racial ethnic members in the United States (Presbyterians of African, Hispanic, Asian descent and Native Americans) shall be guaranteed full participation and access to representation in the decision-making of the church, and SHALL BE ABLE TO FORM CAUCUSES." 8.2 "Consistent with the principles of diversity and

inclusiveness as set forth in 8.2, The General Assembly Council (*now the Presbyterian Mission Agency*) shall consult with and receive input from the racial ethnic caucuses of the church, and shall make provision for the expenses necessary to such consultations. The purpose of such consultation shall include:

- determining the priorities for assisting racial ethnic churches and ministries,
- developing a denominational strategy for racial ethnic church development,
- finding ways to assure the funding and operational needs of schools and other institutions which historically have served Black Americans and other racial ethnic groups.” 8.3

## **CLARIFYING THE ROLE OF RACIAL ETHNIC CAUCUSES**

### **A Definition:**

The word caucus comes from a Native American verb in the language of the Algonquin nations, which means, “to gather”. Caucuses are entities where people of similar characteristics or concerns come together to affirm their identity and to pursue collective goals.

Racial Ethnic Caucuses in the PC(USA) are support communities seeking to overcome inequalities, injustices, paternalism, and racism while vying for full partnership in the mission of the church. They assume the risk of challenging the church when it fails to heed to the “voices of peoples once silenced” including the poor and oppressed. Racial Ethnic Caucuses are self-determining fellowships, ordinarily created not by official ecclesiastical action but by their own constituencies to whom they are primarily accountable. (Adapted from the article, *The Purpose of Caucuses* by Rev. Helen Locklear, 2003).

### **Historic Role of National Caucuses:**

The following are historic roles undertaken by racial ethnic caucuses within the Presbyterian Church. Many of these roles continue today though altered based on denominational changes that have occurred since reunion.

1. **Monitoring** – Acting as a conscience of the church, working for racial ethnic / and multi-cultural congregational transformation, and racial justice.
2. **Advocacy** – Acting as an advocate for program development and funding on behalf of related congregations and communities across the denomination which includes: mid councils and other decision making bodies at all levels of the church; matters related to new congregational development and congregational transformation; racial ethnic women, youth, young adults, and matters of justice for all ages; as well as concerns of emerging countries.
3. **Programmatic** – Working with congregations, mid councils and appropriate General Assembly agencies to address congregational concerns, historical research, assisting appropriate entities at all levels of the church regarding recruitment and enlistment of racial ethnic persons interested in ministry vocations, and equipping persons for leadership roles in program areas, councils, and staff positions. (Adapted from article by Rev. Helen Locklear)
4. **Educational** – Serving as a primary resource for enabling all members of the PC(USA), and racial ethnic persons in particular, to better understand and relate to the unique cultural nuances of racial ethnic Presbyterians and their communities in order to be more effective partners in the mission of Jesus Christ.

The caucuses relate to the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the General Assembly through the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), which has direct access to the General

Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. ACREC's primary responsibility is to advocate for policies that impact racial ethnic individuals. ACREC's mandate does not include programmatic ministries. However, ACREC may advocate for policies related to racial ethnic congregations and communities, which are of major interest and focus for racial ethnic caucuses.

It is understood that the General Assembly's "Shape and Form" process, approved by the 205th General Assembly (1993), officially assigned to ACREC the advocacy role of the caucuses, as well as the role of monitoring, at the General Assembly level. However, there continues to be an appropriate advocacy role for the caucuses at the mid council level relative to programmatic and community issues which are of concern to constituent congregations related to the caucuses. Some of these issues may not require the advocacy of ACREC because of their local focus.

The five current racial ethnic caucuses (African American, Asian, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, and Native American) select one member from each caucus to be elected to ACREC through the General Assembly Nominating process to serve a four-year term with eligibility for one additional term.

The racial ethnic caucuses are committed and prepared to assist the General Assembly in its constitutional responsibility to "Nurture the covenant community of disciples (G-3.0501c)" which includes the racially diverse congregations who relate to the caucuses.

#### **PROPOSED RELATIONSHIP OF RACIAL ETHNIC CAUCUSES WITHIN THE PC (USA)**

1. Racial Ethnic Caucuses will relate to the General Assembly through the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), and the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) in matters related to policies that impact racial ethnic individuals.

2. The Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly may<sup>10</sup> consult and receive input from the Racial Ethnic Caucuses in matters such as:

- determining the priorities for assisting racial ethnic churches and ministries,
- developing a denominational strategy for racial ethnic church development / transformation,
- determining the future financial support and operational needs of schools and other institutions which historically have served Black Americans and other racial ethnic groups. (*Adapted from Articles of Agreement, Article 8.2-8.3*) By action of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board on September 19, 2014, "may" is to be interpreted as "will" by the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), in consultation with the Office of Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries, is requested to develop a process that will enable recommendations from caucuses regarding programmatic ministries to be considered by the PMA Board, as appropriate.

3. Mid councils of the church will be encouraged to utilize the consultative resources of racial ethnic caucuses in developing and implementing strategies for mission with racial ethnic congregations and communities, and the recruitment of persons for ministry vocations, with a particular focus on racial ethnic clergywomen.

4. Racial Ethnic Caucuses will continue to be related to the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) in matters of advocacy.

5. Racial Ethnic Caucuses will continue to be related to Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries through the respective Congregational Support Offices in matters consistent with the role of these offices.

In order to help facilitate the assigned task of the Congregational Support Office, it is recommended that all Congregational Support Offices have a functioning Advisory Committee. Each Advisory Committee should consist of at least two members appointed by the respective caucus.

6. In order to develop an ongoing relationship with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the leaders of the five caucuses (chair/moderator/president) will convene for at least two (2) scheduled conference calls with the Stated Clerk and the Executive Director each year. The scheduling of these calls should be held at such times to provide input from the racial ethnic caucus leadership regarding appropriate items going to the General Assembly, or as needed by the caucus leadership or the Stated Clerk / Executive Director.

7. Racial Ethnic Caucus leadership may hold telephone conference calls at least twice each year to maintain good lines of communication between the caucuses. It is encouraged that these calls include the caucus representatives from ACREC to broaden the sharing of information and input. The calls could also serve a preparatory purpose for planning and developing agendas for the conference calls with the Stated Clerk and Executive Director. Staff may be invited to participate on these calls, as appropriate, with the caucus representatives given the prerogative of meeting without staff.

#### **SUGGESTED FUNDING FOR CONSULTATIONS**

1. Funding for consultations requested by an agency of the General Assembly will be provided by the agency.
2. Funding for conference calls with the Stated Clerk and Executive Director will be provided by these offices.
3. Funding for conference calls between the Racial Ethnic Caucuses will be funded by the caucuses.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The Apostle Paul, writing to the church in Ephesus said, in the words of *The Message*, "(God) handed out gifts . . . to train Christ's followers in skilled servant work, working within Christ's body, the church, until we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son . . ." (*Ephesians 4:11-12*)

We believe this proposed Covenant of Understanding will enable racial ethnic caucuses in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

- to be full contributing partners with the General Assembly and Mid Councils,
- to enrich the life, ministry, and mission of our racial ethnic / multi-cultural congregations and communities, and
- to share our rich gifts, cultures, and commitment to Jesus Christ with the whole church, as together we seek to be "fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ", while faithfully serving God in this time and place. (*Ephesians 4:13*)

