

**ITEM P.203**  
**INFORMATION ITEM**

**Presbyterian Mission Agency Review Committee**  
Recommendations and Report  
<https://pc-biz.org/#/search/6323>  
As of April 25, 2016

**Recommendation 1**

**The Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency recommends that the 222nd General Assembly (2016) do the following: [Note: We recognize that approval of some of these recommendations may make others unnecessary.]**

- 1. That the General Assembly delay the appointment of the All Agency Review scheduled for 2016 and instead direct the Moderators of the 220th, 221st, and 222nd General Assemblies (2012), (2014), and (2016), in consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC), to name a committee of fifteen people to explore the possibility of a merger between the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA).**
  - a. The committee shall be made up of ruling and teaching elders with broad geographic, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity.**
  - b. The committee 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.**
  - c. The PMA and OGA will each appoint a staff person to serve as staff support for the committee.**
  - d. The committee's work will be informed by other churchwide conversations on the future of the church and its structure.**
  - e. The assembly will allocate sufficient resources so that this committee can meet regularly and consult with other PC(USA) constituents, as well as others who could provide insight into the process.**
  - f. Recommendations for any missional and structural changes will be brought to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).**

**Recommendation 2**

- 2. That the General Assembly direct the Moderator of the 222nd General Assembly (2016), in consultation with the GANC, to name a committee of eight people to review the responsibilities of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) and provide a plan for restructuring the Board so that it can be better able to do the adaptive work necessary to provide leadership and guidance for the PMA and the church, today and into the next generation.**

**Recommendation 3**

3. **That the General Assembly direct the directors of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP), and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC) to appoint a staff committee to explore the best ways for Shared Services (finance and accounting, information technology, payroll, communication, translations, human resources, legal and risk management, internal audit, building services, mail and print, Presbyterian Distribution Service, and the Hubbard Press) to serve those four agencies.**
  - a. **The committee shall be made up of equal staff representation from the four agencies using the Shared Services.**
  - b. **The committee shall bring recommendations to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).**

## **Rationale**

### **Addendum - 02.16.2016**

Since the January 6, 2016, release of this committee's report, we have been made aware of changes and one lapse in process that merit addressing.

1. The committee apologizes for neglecting to provide an advance copy of our report to the PMA Executive Board and Interim Director as requested in our charge. This was regrettably (and simply) an oversight on our part.
2. Information PMA staff provided us in spring 2015 regarding the triennium audit and agency communication strategy were at that time in process. We understand that these situations have been resolved and implemented since then.
3. The number of email newsletters and stand-alone websites we cited in our report has been disputed by PMA executive staff. Our committee members, through several interviews with various PMA employees, obtained information regarding PMA electronic communication. Although we do not dispute the actual number of electronic newsletters on the issue of hunger, for example, we do question why different PMA staff members would provide us with varying numbers.

The goal of this review report was to take a snapshot of the agency; to celebrate accomplishments and address issues occurring at one particular time in the life of the agency's mission and ministry. Our hope is that by identifying systemic matters, we would provide both the PMA and the assembly with a working document that will be a useful tool as our denomination moves forward in this next season of ministry.

## **Executive Summary**

Responding to the call to join God's mission for the transformation of creation, the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) equips, inspires, and connects the church to share the love of God in Jesus Christ. God has blessed the church with many talented and faithful servants at the PMA who feel called to minister with the church in their various capacities. Their hard work is all the more admirable in light of recent transitions and controversies.

Though the PMA has produced good work, it is evident that there are significant weaknesses in a number of areas, including: strategic decision-making and priority-setting; organizational culture and work environment; and collaborative efforts with other General Assembly agencies. This report outlines what we gleaned from interviews, correspondence, and promotional materials. We believe that what we

observed permeates PMA organizational structure and culture and should not be considered isolated to particular situations or departments.

In addition to the recommendations above, the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency directs the Presbyterian Mission Agency to consider the following:

1. That the PMA develop internal educational opportunities for staff to become better informed about the other five agencies in order to foster creative collaboration.

In our interviews it was apparent that PMA staff is in need of a broader understanding of the work of the other agencies to foster greater collaboration. While we understand there are existing staff development days, these have not been sufficient to provide the information and opportunities for building relationships that staff need.

2. That the PMA develop and implement a plan to educate all donors about how their donations are allocated, including a clear breakdown of what percentage goes directly to mission funding and what percentage is applied to administrative costs. This information should be easily accessible.

The review committee had great difficulty obtaining information regarding the allocation of mission funds. We discovered it is a variable amount between 5 percent and 22 percent for donor designated contributions. It seems that it is not fully understood by the program staff or senior leadership. Allocating for administrative costs is a common standard and is a standard measure of efficiency of a charity. We believe transparency in education and communication related to these allocations also provides an incentive for PMA to keep these costs as low as possible.

3. That the PMA provide a chaplain for the Presbyterian Center.

After several years of what many characterized as an environment of anxiety and grief related to precipitous and/or impending layoffs, almost constant restructuring and organizational shifts all on top of general life events, the review committee found staff at every level in need of spiritual support. As a church agency, the PMA has a serious responsibility and unique opportunity to create a work environment that fosters health for the whole person. The chaplain would provide spiritual care for people of all faith traditions.

4. That PMA engage in regular cultural humility training provided by outside consultants for PMAB and staff.

Recent events (including culturally stereotypical and offensive printed materials for Special Offerings and the confusing “Ask Me Why You Matter” campaign) highlight the systemic lack of cultural humility and awareness at the agency. We recommend ongoing and regular education for *all* personnel led by experienced professionals in this discipline not employed by the agency. We view this as a necessary first step toward expanding cultural humility that can then lead to models for the wider church.

## **Rationale Overall**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency was charged by the 221st General Assembly

(2014) to evaluate the relationship of the PMA with the mission of the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). We were guided by the Agency Review Manual, prepared by the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), which is based on the agency review committee guidelines in the *Manual of the General Assembly: Organization for Mission*. Over a period of more than sixteen months, beginning in Fall 2014, we met in person on three separate occasions, communicated via email and conference calls regularly, and interviewed more than sixty-five individuals. These interviews were with PMA staff, Board members, mid council representatives, staff of other General Assembly agencies, and other stakeholders. We also consulted with the Committee to Review the Office of General Assembly. Because there was a significant amount of existing data from previous surveys, we decided not to conduct yet another formal survey for this review.

We began our review by reading a self-study document prepared for us by PMA staff and the PMAB. We were very thankful for this document and the work that went into it. The report did a very good job of orienting us to the PMA and of documenting the PMA's work in response to the recommendations of the last PMA review committee. The report also highlighted the breadth and quality of the PMA's mission around the world. Our committee also reviewed additional documents provided by the PMA as well as reports from the General Assembly.

It is important to note that during the course of our work PMA experienced significant challenges and controversies, all of which were highly publicized by church-related press and in social media. The agency discovered that some staff assigned to the 1001 New Worshipping Communities initiative had established a separate, nonprofit organization to receive funds to support that initiative. A routine audit of the 2013 Presbyterian Youth Triennium showed larger losses than had previously been reported. The Special Offerings department released promotional materials for the One Great Hour of Sharing offering that were culturally insensitive. In addition, since our review work began, the Executive Director of the PMA has resigned and the PMAB has named an Interim Executive Director. While it was not this committee's responsibility to address these specific incidents, we did look closely at how the culture and systems within PMA might have allowed these incidents to occur.

The committee members include: Teaching Elder Debra Avery, Oakland, California, San Francisco Presbytery; Teaching Elder Eric Beene, Savannah, Georgia, Savannah Presbytery; Ruling Elder Tacey Braithwaite, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, South Dakota Presbytery; Teaching Elder Eliana Maxim, Seattle, Washington, Seattle Presbytery; Teaching Elder Nancy Muth, Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania, Philadelphia Presbytery; Teaching Elder Ken Page, Phoenix, Arizona, Grand Canyon Presbytery; Ruling Elder Stephen Proctor, Dillsburg, Pennsylvania, Carlisle Presbytery; Ruling Elder Chris Rhodes, Santa Rosa, California, Redwoods Presbytery; Ruling Elder Barbara Sarjeant, Orangeburg, South Carolina, Charleston Atlantic Presbytery; Ruling Elder Elizabeth Swee, Moorhead, Minnesota, Northern Plains Presbytery; Ruling Elder James Tse, Woodhaven, New York, New York City Presbytery; Teaching Elder Perry Wootten, Mt. Kisco, New York, New York City Presbytery.

## II. A BRIEF OVERVIEW

### A. *Accolades*

Throughout this process, our committee found much to be affirmed in the work and ministry of the PMA. The PMA is determined to share the good news of Jesus Christ by demonstrating a true and meaningful commitment to those in need in every area of life and the world, regardless of economic or social strata, including providing assistance in times of disaster, offering guidance to congregations, assisting displaced persons, helping the unemployed, supporting youth in developing faith, and raising the level of education.

Not only is the PMA doing good work, but successes are communicated broadly throughout the denomination.

The use of denominational magazines, news reports, annual reports, promotional materials, websites, social media, and many other sources makes it possible for everyone to learn about the many successes of the PC(USA). We were provided with many well-written articles and colorful images describing the wonderful works of ministry and mission accomplished on behalf of the whole church. Our committee celebrates the scope of the ministries and the successful outcomes of the work of PMA. We are also encouraged by new initiatives of the PMA communications staff to better share the stories of the accomplishments of the PMA and encourage greater commitment by the whole church to the work of PMA.

### B. *Mission and Values*

To focus the broad range of work the PMA is tasked with completing, PMA executive staff and PMAB members have developed and clearly articulated statements on the mission and core values of the PMA. The PMA's mission is "to inspire, equip and connect the PC(USA) in its many expressions to serve Christ in the world through new and existing communities of faith, hope, love and witness." The PMA lives out this missional expression through the core values of Collaboration, Accountability, Responsiveness, and Excellence. The materials provided to us by the PMA for the review make clear that these statements of the organizational mission and values are meant to serve as the guideposts for the agency's work.

### C. *Staff*

Our committee was impressed by the quality of the PMA staff. The PMA has many talented and faithful employees doing ministry in Louisville, deployed across the United States, and around the world. We want to emphasize that the staff we interviewed are passionate about their jobs, have a deep love of Christ and the work of the church, and feel called to serve. It is apparent that PMA staff members are highly qualified for the work they do. This shows in the high quality of the materials and programs that are developed and presented. In addition, PMA staff should be commended for their high level of commitment, especially when significant upheaval and controversy has been the norm.

Despite the many successes, the clearly articulated mission and values, and the great talent and commitment of PMA staff, we found some important areas of concern. Our concerns center in three areas:

- A lack of a clearly communicated *strategic* direction for the PMA among staff and PMAB members.
- Poor coordination with other agencies of the General Assembly.
- An organizational culture and work environment characterized by anxiety, distrust, and a clear lack in the areas of spiritual leadership, transparency, and cultural humility.

## III. PMA STRATEGY OBSERVATIONS

In our research, we found that there was a frequent disconnect between decision-making and priority-setting and operational strategy. In some cases, though Mission and Values were clearly articulated, in the execution of the work, there seemed to be no strategic plan guiding overall priority setting and decision

making. This seemed to contribute to tension among staff and may have served to dilute the overall effectiveness of the PMA.

#### *A. Resource-Driven*

The entire PC(USA) recognizes that the membership and the resulting revenue of the church have been declining. The PMAB and staff have communicated internally and externally about the financial limitations at PMA and the expected shortfalls in the near future. The reality of decreasing resources requires the denomination to be more aware of and concerned about balancing the need to demonstrate fiscal responsibility with the importance of sustaining current programs and leaning into the ongoing challenge of creating programming that leads us into the future. However, as our work progressed, it seemed clear that there has been a shift from attending to the strategic priorities that emerge from the Mission and Values to an overwhelming focus on decision-making driven solely by the availability of resources.

Though it may be that some denominational programs will not be sustainable in our more resource-constrained church, it is critical for the church to become more open to inspiration rather than allowing financial desperation to dictate the terms of change. Inspiration needs to be rooted in missional identity and shared values. Though more limited financial resources characterize the current context for decision-making, it is imperative that the PMA be more intentional about attending to the Mission and Values as a first priority as strategic decisions are made.

#### *B. Communication*

Our committee found that PMA communications also do not reflect strategic decision-making. This is not to imply that there is a lack of information being shared. In fact, from a messaging standpoint, there is a blizzard of information that comes from the PMA. The overwhelming amount of information provided for denominational use hinders clarity about the mission and work of the PMA. For instance:

- At the time of our study, there were more than 100,000 pages on the denomination's website. Staff has primarily maintained the information in their respective departments. We understand that each area within the PMA has a compelling story and that each area needs to respond to requests for information and resources that come from mid councils and congregations. Unfortunately, while important content continues to be added, information is rarely removed and the indexing of each additional page has created a labyrinthine agglomeration of data, which is barely accessible even through a Google search.
- Beyond the official website, there are a number of stand-alone sites that are maintained outside of the PMA's administration. For example, the 1001 Worshiping Communities site utilized a tool that was not part of the range of tools utilized by the IT staff, making it difficult for them to provide support. Issues of standardization of platforms and the need for security are obvious.
- In addition to the PMA's communication through websites, there are more than 100 electronic newsletters. According to the Communications staff, fifteen of those electronic newsletters are on the issue of hunger alone. At the time of our interviews with staff, attempts to consolidate these publications had been unsuccessful.

We believe that the PMA has good intentions behind the desire to share more information. However, there is a lack of clarity around vision and focus. A collaborative communication plan developed by

communication experts and with consensus of leaders is essential for the PMA to be better equipped to communicate its strategic direction and align vision and values across the denomination.

Finally, there is a lack of a unified, strategic denominational voice in the public arena. In ecumenical, interfaith, and secular engagement, there are multiple voices offering a multiplicity of identities. This lack of a single person empowered to speak as the “voice” of the General Assembly was raised in previous agency reviews. While the Stated Clerk was named as the person empowered in that role, with the volume of communication coming from the PMA touching on such a breadth of issues, it is easy to see why some would be confused about that role.

### *C. Board Involvement*

Our committee understood that the primary responsibility for setting strategic direction for the PMA rests with the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB). However, we do not believe the PMAB has a good understanding of the big picture that includes both the work of the PMA and the PMAB’s role in that work. In actual practice, we observed that missional goals seem to be set by a subset of PMA staff.

The PMAB has changed significantly in its responsibilities, structure, and composition in recent years. Previously, the General Assembly Council was comprehensive of all agencies of the denomination and had broad authority to act on behalf of the General Assembly between meetings. It was a large body meant to be representative of the whole church. In recent years, how the six agencies are structured and relate to each other and the General Assembly have changed. When the General Assembly Council was eliminated, the PMAB was created. It is clear to us that the current configuration of the PMAB is not effective. Board members, staff, and other stakeholders we interviewed shared the following insights:

- There is a lack of clarity in the church at large as well as among Board members related to the scope of their work.
- There is significant pressure to “be all things to all people.”
- The size of the PMAB is too large, with a total of forty-seven voting and ten non-voting members.
- The process by which Board members are nominated and assigned lacks the focus and intentionality required to assure that the PMAB is flexible enough to accomplish their work.
- There is confusion regarding specific responsibilities and lines of accountability between the PMAB and the advisory committees, including the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, and the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns, and how they relate to other agencies including the General Assembly.
- The inclusion of Shared Services (Information Technology, Finance and Accounting, Building Services, etc.) within the PMA creates problems because, while they provide services to several agencies, they are accountable only to PMA.

PMAB members told us that they believe it would be helpful to them to reconfigure and envision the structure and role of the PMAB in order to align Board governance with strategic and fiduciary roles. In the past two years, to overcome a feeling that the Board was unable to achieve more than routine approval

of the recommendations of staff and others, the PMAB has spent time in training on their governance role. Members of the Board told us of their desire to be more engaged in their roles, particularly in setting priorities for their work and using their time together as a Board more wisely.

#### IV. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

We observed a tendency for PMA staff to emphasize their many successful outcomes and outputs while attention to organizational culture, processes, and management are inconsistent. In our interviews, PMAB leaders and senior management maintained that recent controversies are isolated incidents and not evidence of any systemic problems in the agency. However, our committee believes that there is a direct relationship between systemic organizational culture and these incidents.

##### A. *Work Environment*

In interviews and conversations, the PMA staff, PMAB members, and other stakeholders repeatedly told us that even though there are clear successes in mission and ministry, these successes have been accomplished despite an organizational culture that is heavy-handed and a management style that has made for a highly stressful and sometimes even unhealthy work environment. In recent years, a secular corporate model has emerged as the primary organizational form. In that shift, it seems that the PMA has lost what is essential and unique to this organization: an ecclesial identity, a foundation in the Form of Government, and a sense of corporate spirituality. This has been seen not only in frequent downsizing actions, but also in the handling of specific personnel concerns connected with recent controversies connected to PMA work.

The organizational culture has not only hindered the best intentions and efforts of staff, but also come at a spiritual cost. We consistently heard concerns about the following:

- Low morale and often unbearable anxiety among staff and PMAB members.
- Cumbersome and unresponsive hierarchy with more layers of management than are appropriate for an organization the size of the PMA.
- Failure to include staff in decision-making processes that affect the programs they manage.
- A “silo mentality” fostered by poor internal communication, competition for scarce resources, and interdepartmental distrust.
- The perception that staff members are not trusted by management.
- Responsibility for accomplishing significant work without the authority to make and implement decisions.
- A sense that some individual staff members have special status allowing them to bypass processes and systems designed to assure accountability.
- Inconsistent leadership training and skills for managers and supervisors.

We believe that outcomes are important and should be properly acknowledged and affirmed. But the

long-term success of the PMA, as an organization committed to following Jesus Christ, is dependent on healthy relationships fostered in a culture that rewards collaborative behavior and nurtures health and wholeness for the whole person. This is especially true in a time of significant change.

### B. *Anxiety and Distrust*

In our interviews, our committee discovered that the overarching problem of the current culture of anxiety, fear, distrust, and conflict avoidance was a significant factor in the difficulties within the PMA. The incidents involving the 1001 New Worshipping Communities program, the Youth Triennium, and the production of Special Offering materials that many found to perpetuate disturbing stereotypes, both illustrated and perpetuated that anxiety and distrust. Several people that we interviewed even used the term PTSD to describe the mood at PMA before and, especially, after those incidents. Others referred to distrust between staff and leadership. Several times, comments made in interviews provided evidence of this low-trust, high anxiety environment, such as:

- We don't want to consult the bean counters in accounting—we just want to get things done.
- We built a “rogue website” because we don't believe the tech department is capable of creating something that will meet our needs.
- We don't want to consult with the advisory committee or program area because that would be a pain.
- We don't want to go through the legal department, so we'll just use a website to provide legal advice.

We often heard the objection that collaboration can make for slow decision making. For example, when some departments have worked outside of established systems to set up stand-alone websites, the staff in those departments told us they did so because they needed to be more nimble and responsive. While it is true that in the past administrative departments such as accounting or legal have slowed down or advised against programming and working with advisory committees can be ponderous, it is also true that these consultative processes provide necessary checks and balances and offer appropriate checkpoints for program staff. We do not believe that transparency, collaboration, and clarity need to be sacrificed for the sake of speed and decisiveness. Given current realities, it is clear to us that it is important for PMA to encourage this kind of departmental collaboration in order to avoid the kinds of problems that we have seen at PMA over the past year.

### C. *Spiritual Life*

As a faith-based organization, the PMA has a unique opportunity and responsibility to create a work environment that fosters health for the whole person. The PMA's open hiring policy means people of different faith backgrounds work together. However, the values inherent in Reformed spirituality can provide a starting point from which diverse spiritual practices can emerge and be part of the overall plan for employee support. Though some individuals in the organization are living into this potential, there seems to be a general lack of spiritual leadership among the staff. Three areas in particular were noted:

- **Spiritual Care:** After several years of what many characterized as an environment of precipitous and/or impending layoffs, almost constant restructuring and organizational decision making

driven more by budget demands than ministry needs, staff at every level are in need of pastoral care. Currently, there is no overarching program for the spiritual care of PMA employees.

- **Worship Life:** Chapel attendance is low. In fact, some staff reported fear that chapel attendance signals a light workload, which could trigger elimination of their position. Other staff shared that they had been actively discouraged from attending chapel by supervisors. To be sure, chapel attendance cannot be required. However, staff members should be encouraged to engage in specific times of prayer and praise as part of community life.
- **Reformed Theology and Presbyterian Polity:** PMA staff comes from a variety of faith backgrounds. While this diversity is a gift, it also presents a unique challenge with regard to how staff represents the unique witness of Presbyterian theology, history, and polity.

#### D. *Transparency*

In our interviews, we found a significant lack of trust and silo behavior across all departments. This is part of a “vicious cycle” that is both derived from and contributes to a lack of transparency. It is apparent that collaborative efforts have suffered when individuals and departments have felt outside of the loop in the decision-making process. It is no surprise that those working in this kind of environment have become wary and protective of their own interests rather than reach out to work with others. We observed that open communication is particularly lacking when the lack of resources has threatened existing programs.

While it is understandable that staff would be reluctant to communicate bad news, transparency in difficult times is all the more important. In addition, lack of transparency often contributes to a sense that there is a corresponding lack of self-understanding. A clear example of this was seen in the PMA’s own self-study, which was provided for our committee. Though there is plenty to celebrate, there no section that details growing edges. This concerned us. In order to foster a culture of trust and transparency, PMA will need to demonstrate a willingness to share all news even when disclosure is unflattering.

Our committee believes that there is a sincere desire among PMA staff and PMAB members to be more transparent and engaging. Because of this, culture has shifted some. For instance, there was a greater openness to input from all staff and departments in the budget planning in the past two years. However, we discovered other areas in which transparency actually seems to be discouraged. For example, it is very difficult for a donor to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to fully understand what portion of their donation is allocated to administrative costs and what portion actually goes to mission. We were unable to get a firm answer to this question, even in our multiple interviews.

#### E. *Cultural Humility*

Cultural humility has been defined as the ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is “other oriented” (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the person. The PMAB has a high commitment to the mandate of racial and ethnic inclusiveness at the national level. Cultural proficiency and competency is underscored through agency training and responsible engagement. The PMA has also made some efforts to develop a more culturally inclusive staff, and we encourage them to deepen this effort in PMA and at all levels of the church.

However, our committee observed a need for further expansion and affirmation of cultural humility within the PMA. This assessment is confirmed by the admission of Board members that the PMAB as a whole has a long way to go in regards to cultural awareness and humility. In several interviews with staff,

we also heard that privileged staff (often Caucasian) operate outside of policies with no communication with other departments. In addition, when racial ethnic staff raised concerns it was disregarded. That was certainly the case with the decision to use racially biased materials for the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering. Even though there was some consultation over racial ethnic concerns, the decision to go ahead with the objectionable materials was made unilaterally and ignored those concerns.

Because racial ethnic concerns are at the heart of denominational values and vision, collaborative efforts should always include the advice and/or participation of people of color. Further, when that advice is sought, decision-makers, particularly those who are white, need to be aware that they may lack cultural perspective. For example, we noted that the only resources produced by PMA in languages other than English are those that the PMA staff, not the communities of color who are the recipients of those resources, deem important to be translated. The privileged determine what the rest need to know. This lack of cultural perspective often makes it impossible for the experience and knowledge of people of color to be truly known and understood.

At every level of the denomination, we need to hire and call people of all races. In addition, white staff members need to be especially aware of the seen and unseen effects of privilege on collaboration. Our committee believes that in our efforts to be a more inclusive church it is essential that the PMA staff lead us by example in deepening personal cultural humility and integrating it into every aspect of the church.

## V. COORDINATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Our committee's investigation of the overall work of the PMA revealed that there is a paucity of coordination with the other agencies. This has resulted in a lack of integration and uncertainty regarding their common purpose. This lack of coordination leads to competition and distrust between the agencies rather than appreciation and collaboration. We noted frequent themes of siloing not only within different program areas within PMA but also among the six different agencies of the PC(USA). Such stories included:

- The PMA has launched a number of new fundraising initiatives on its own in the last several years. While this may be an appropriate and necessary endeavor in the times we live in, it seems to us that this kind of effort would be much better undertaken in partnership with the Presbyterian Foundation, which has significant expertise in this area.
- The Office of the General Assembly bid out a computer programming services contract for \$200,000. PMA's tech department had been providing those services, but OGA was dissatisfied because they were unable to provide oversight and accountability. PMA was invited to be one bidder among several on the contract, but the PMA bid expressed no interest in meeting the OGA's request for changes in programming support and accountability.
- In March 2015, the PMA produced an issue of *Presbyterians Today* entitled "The Presbyterian Resource Guide for Ministry." It is an excellent issue, full of helpful resources from PMA. However, we were told that a few weeks before publication, OGA noticed that the issue being produced did not include anything about OGA's resources for ministry. OGA was given a page or two at the last minute, which was the immediate response to this concern.
- In July 2015, the PMA launched an antiracism awareness campaign "Ask Me Why You Matter." The campaign was rolled out at Big Tent 2015 after three months of development and minimal collaboration with other denominational agencies. This was glaringly apparent when

there was no communication between the PMA staff working on the campaign and the General Assembly appointed committee on churchwide conversation on race, racism, ethnicity, and ethnocentrism.

Approaching the issue of collaboration among all six agencies from a review of only one agency, we are not completely able to fathom whether and/or to what extent this disconnect exists between all the agencies. The perceived and perhaps intentional disconnect between the agencies concerns us. Situations such as these highlight missed opportunities to draw on shared “in-house” expertise and denominational wisdom.

It is clear from the interviews we conducted that the staff sincerely desire better coordination and communication between the PMA and the other agencies of the PC(USA). We did learn that concerns about better coordination and collaboration have been discussed and reviewed on a number of occasions. However, it is clear to us that these periodic reviews and discussions did not always bring about action. It should be noted that the 2010 PMA Review Committee also called for a closer collaboration between the six agencies. We acknowledge that efforts have been made to respond to this goal, including quarterly meetings of agency heads (two of which include the PMAB chairs); the identification and pursuit of joint projects between agencies; collaboration on the six-agency annual report; collaboration on the Big Tent conference, etc. However, we believe that more needs to be done in this area in order to ensure greater efficacy of ministry and mission.

## VI. CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that something new is happening in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Congregations and mid councils are pursuing new models for planning, staffing, and funding ministry. As a church, we can be inspired by the growing cultural diversity found in local congregations. We can work to support each other as we learn to live into the reality of smaller congregations with limited financial resources and unlimited possibility for mission in their communities. We can celebrate the emerging energy for collaboration within creative ecumenical and entrepreneurial partnerships both within and among our congregations. Even in the midst of this reality of such great change in the life of our denomination, there is still significant passion and excitement around evangelism, social justice, biblical scholarship, world mission, and church planting.

We believe it is essential for the future of our denomination that the PMA embrace the change that is already among us. We pray that the PMA will begin to make the adaptive organizational changes needed to serve in this new reality. This is not simply another appeal for restructuring endeavors. Our opportunity now is change on a deeper systemic level. It is our strong hope that in addressing the strategic, spiritual, and functional challenges presented in this report, the PMA will be better able to lead the church in creatively, strategically, and adaptively leaning into the future God is bringing us with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.

### **Rationale for Recommendation 1**

The review committee has done its work during a time of calls for churchwide introspection, including an invitation by the General Assembly Moderator to explore the church’s identity, a conversation led by COGA on the future of the church, as well as many other concurrent dialogues. In addition, transitions in both the PMA and OGA leadership offers a unique opportunity to envision new ways of leading the church.

The committee found significant duplication and siloing within the Presbyterian Mission Agency and between the PMA and OGA. This has contributed to the ongoing confusion regarding who speaks for the denomination and bears the primary responsibility for communicating the church's message to its constituents and the world.

This moment in our church's history presents us with a unique opportunity to become a more nimble organization that can better serve the mission of the denomination. We believe that the proposed committee would be the best way forward in crafting and clarifying the future structure of the church.

### **Rationale for Recommendation 2**

It was apparent to the review committee that the current Board size (57) and structure are unwieldy and outdated. While this served as an important transitional body, the current composition hinders the body from the adaptive change required for today.

While both technical tasks and strategic vision are within the purview of the PMAB, the strong emphasis on oversight and compliance has moved the Board into a narrower, hands-on prescriptive approach with many layers of accountability and decision-making. This has come at the expense of both the broader strategic work of vision-casting and the necessary commitment to communicating that vision.

### **Rationale for Recommendation 3**

Currently, Shared Services is housed with the Presbyterian Mission Agency and is accountable to the PMA Executive Director. However, the department serves OGA, PILP, PPC, and PMA. We heard about expensive duplication of shared services in all four of the agencies. In addition, we heard of difficulties in sharing services without shared supervisory authority.

### **Other Comments**

#### **Committee to Review OGA Comment**

The Committee to Review the Office of the General Assembly urges the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to approve Recommendation 1 in the report of the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency as written in Item 04-11.

The committee echoes the concerns expressed by the Committee to Review the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and sees the need for a focused and complete assessment of the roles of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), and whether or not it would serve the mission of the church to merge these agencies. It should be noted that our advice does not presume an answer to this question, but reflects our belief that it is a question worth asking.

### **Additional Resources**

Language-Korean: [PMA Review.pdf](#)

Language-Spanish: [PMA Review-Spanish.pdf](#)