

For Information

**Contrasting the purposes of the three committees coming out  
of the 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly**

**Way Forward Commission:**

*“To study and identify a vision for the structure and function of the General Assembly agencies of the PC(USA).”*

**Six Agency Review Committee:**

*“To review the service of the whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its six agencies in implementing the General Assembly’s mission directives”*

**2020 Vision Committee:**

*“To develop a guiding statement for the denomination and make a plan for its implementation with all deliberate speed”*

**The Way Forward Commission**  
(Reformatted)

**In response to Item 04-07, the assembly approves the following resolution:**

[Founding Principle]:

**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.

[Mandate]:

**The mandate of the commission is**

1. 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
  - a. to assess institutional performance, both internally among the agencies and externally as they interface with the congregations.
  - b. 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.
2. The commission shall further describe and implement a General-Assembly level staffing pattern that will accomplish its vision.
3. The commission shall be guided in its development and articulation of this vision and structure by Reformed ecclesiology as expressed in our Constitution.

[Guiding Principles]:

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

[Commission Powers]:

**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.

[Composition]:

**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.

## 2020 Vision Team

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

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

5. The committee will **develop recommendations that shall be the only business for the Assembly Committee on The Way Forward to review at the 223rd General Assembly (2018)**. The only exception would be overtures that respond directly to any reports from the 2020 Vision Team. The intention is that there will be a new vision for the denomination by the 224th General Assembly (2020).
6. The assembly shall allocate **sufficient resources** for this committee to effectively accomplish its work.

**Rationale:**

*“I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”—Isaiah 43:19.*

The members of the Assembly Committee on “The Way Forward” are excited because we believe that God IS doing a new thing in the PC(USA)! However, we have only begun the process of trying to perceive it. In the course of our work this week, we have had opportunities to reflect on the mission and vision of our denomination, but we believe a faithful, thoughtful assessment of The Way Forward will require more time for listening as well as people with a more targeted set of skills.

We believe a committee charged with prayerfully discerning a guiding statement for the denomination will, in the course of working on that task, necessarily gain a deeper understanding of denominational identity. It will then be poised to make strong recommendations for the consideration of the Assembly Committee on The Way Forward of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

We recognize that the church of the future will not look the same as it does today. For this reason, we want to encourage that special attention be paid to the makeup of the committee. We hope it will include: longtime Presbyterians with an understanding of who we’ve been as well as young Presbyterians with a dream of who we can be; people with all kinds of cultural perspectives who can best represent the diverse expressions of God’s voice in the world; those who are doing ministry in a variety of settings, including the parish, validated positions, new worshiping communities, and church plants; and those who feel “left behind” by the denomination.

In an effort to be relevant to a changing world, we hope that this committee will focus on issues facing society, such as: demographic and social change; shifts in economic power; rapid urbanization; climate change; resource scarcity; and technological breakthroughs.

Furthermore, we acknowledge that “form follows function,” yet most of the overtures assigned to our committee this year have had to do with the *form* of the denomination (how often we vote, how our agencies are structured), rather than its *function* (what are we doing to respond to “what breaks God’s heart?”). While there are certainly pressing issues that pertain to the structure of the denomination, that structure

should serve the mission and vision of the PC(USA). It is essential that the next Assembly Committee on the Way Forward be allowed to focus all its energy on embracing a vision for the future of the denomination.

It is hard to say, at this point, where this process will lead. We discern a sense of urgency to develop vision with all deliberate speed. We hope the 223rd General Assembly (2018) will be able to approve a guiding statement for the denomination as well as a plan for its implementation. We also understand that the 2020 Vision Team, in response to the prompting of the Spirit, may choose to make other recommendations to the next Assembly Committee on The Way Forward. We do not wish to dictate the outcome of this process; rather, we value the process of discernment itself, trusting that careful discernment will lead to faithful action.

## Six Agency Review Committee

**Purpose:** In response to a recommendation from the Committee on Review of the General Assembly Council, the assembly created a review committee to:

**“review the service of the whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its six agencies in implementing the General Assembly’s mission directives”**  
(*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, p. 727).

Articulating a rationale for this committee, the Review Committee of the General Assembly Council observed:

While the separate review of each of the six agencies is a helpful practice and has fostered improvements, this Review Committee observed that no one in the current system is charged with looking at the overall effectiveness of the whole. Coordination among the six agencies is voluntary and not always effective. Such a review should focus broadly on the effectiveness of the six agencies and other governing bodies in implementing the General Assembly’s mission directives and should not duplicate the more detailed work of the individual agency reviews committees. Particular attention should be given to how or if these agencies work cooperatively and where or if there is duplication of services in the system. This review committee observed that some agencies are not working well together, but also that there are some beneficial cooperative efforts. These happen on a voluntary basis with no recommendation that this occur regularly throughout the system. This review committee also heard some people questioning the rationale for the separation of the GAC and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA). (Minutes, 2008, Part I, pp. 727–28)

## GANC Descriptions of Special Committees

2016 Special Commissions, Committees, Task Forces from the 222nd GA (2016)  
Entities

### **2020 Vision Team -**

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

223rd General Assembly (2018). The only exception would be overtures that respond directly to any reports from the 2020 Vision Team. The intention is that there will be a new vision for the denomination by the 224th General Assembly (2020).

6. The assembly shall allocate sufficient resources for this committee to effectively accomplish its work.

### **Way Forward Commission -**

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.

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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 nonprofits, 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;
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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.