PCA Strategic Plan

Prepared for 2009 and 2010 Cooperative Ministries Committee

I. CREATING A PERSPECTIVE FOR PLANNING

The Presbyterian Church in America progresses into its fourth decade with increasing awareness of the challenges presented by our changing world as we seek to be faithful to our Sovereign Lord. One obvious way of measuring the net effect of these challenges is the decreasing rate of the PCA’s numerical growth. Through the early decades of our existence we grew at between five and eight percent per year (enabling us roughly to double in total size each decade). In recent years our growth has been two to three percent. These dynamics are typical of young organizations and institutions whose periods of advance and regression are often represented by a modified S-curve:

While numerical growth is not necessarily a gauge of faithfulness or influence, slowed growth at least requires consideration of how we should best represent our Savior and most responsibly participate in the progress of his Kingdom. Organizations that best fulfill their mission determine how to maintain their values while honestly facing challenges that could lead to long-term decline (anticipating needed change before a decline in the S-curve becomes precipitous). This Strategic Plan seeks to address these realities by helping the PCA identify its challenges, address them with strategies that are consistent with our biblical values, and build denominational support for implementing these strategies. The overall goal is to enable the church to work together to steward its blessings and resources to advance the cause of Christ according to the principles and priorities of his Word.
A. Charting Change

In order to bring about healthy change a church must develop a “holy discontent” with some aspects of its present situation. If people assume that everything is right (ER in the chart below), then there is no incentive to change. Apathy and immobility characterize the church because any change is presumed to be the enemy of present comfort. But the antidote to apathy is not panic. Those who seek to bring about change by claiming that everything is wrong (EW in the chart below) create cynicism and paralysis. Change is meaningless when hope dies. When everything is wrong the perceived enemy is not change but rather the leadership (past or present) that allowed this hopeless situation to develop. Thus, motivations for healthy change cannot be found in either self-serving apathy or other-directed cynicism, but rather in something between.

Healthy change occurs when problems are acknowledged – providing motivation for change – along with a realistic vision of what life can be when problems are addressed – providing hope for the future. People who have hope for a changed future are neither apathetic nor despairing; they believe, “We Have a Mission” (WHAM in the chart below) and want to make progress in God’s purposes. A compelling sense of mission creates zeal for change, and makes any barrier to progress toward the envisioned future the real enemy. The “sweet spot” for healthy change occurs when God’s people understand and unite in missionally purpose. Mission creates zeal for change, hope for tomorrow, and a desire to see plans that tell us how our lives can further God’s purposes.

Thus, the goal of this Strategic Plan is not to convince others that everything is right or that everything is wrong. In order to annul apathy, we intend to be realistic about the challenges we must face (both internally and externally). In order to dispel despair, we intend to identify the resources and blessings God has granted the PCA. Finally, we intend to propose plans for using these resources and blessings in ways that we pray will unite and ignite God’s people for his purposes. All of this we do because we believe we have a mission, and we believe the vast majority of those in the PCA believe the same.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Attitudes/Responses</th>
<th>Perceived Enemy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EW</td>
<td>Cynicism/Paralysis</td>
<td>Past/Present leadership enemy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAM</td>
<td>Zeal/Change</td>
<td>Barriers to Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>ER</td>
<td>Apathy/Immobility</td>
<td>Change is Enemy</td>
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Charting Change
B. How Has the PCA’s Mission Developed So Far?

The development of missional purpose begins with identifying the values we hold most dear. When our values guide the plans we make for addressing challenges to Kingdom progress, then we believe we are acting consistently with our mission and have zeal for these purposes. Our values are well identified in the “motto” of the PCA: Faithful to Scripture, True to the Reformed Faith, and Obedient to the Great Commission.

The phrases of this motto also provide insight into the missional development of the PCA. It is fair to say that commitment to the inerrancy of Scripture was the driving force of our founding and that the churches who initially came into the PCA immediately united in this value. Determining what it meant to be true to the Reformed faith was not as unifying, and created significant debates among us for the next 30 years. These debates both clouded understanding of our mission and inhibited cooperative participation in it. While progress has been made in defining how we will hold each other accountable for being true to the Reformed faith, relational tensions wax and wane around this issue. Thus, the next stage of PCA development likely relates to the last phrase of our motto. How we do mission together, and whether we can do mission together, is the key to our future. If we are able to unite in missional purpose, we have much to contribute to the future of the Kingdom; if we cannot, then our future is likely incessant, inward-focused pettiness.

**PCA Missional Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faithful to Scripture</th>
<th>First 30 seconds</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>True to Reformed Faith</td>
<td>Last 30 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obedient to Great Commission</td>
<td>Next era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will we do mission?</td>
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Determined how we do mission together will likely surface past relational and perspectival tensions, but failing to define our mission guarantees our demise. Thus, developing plans for doing mission together simultaneously puts us in a position of great peril and opportunity. The peril of renewed dissension is obvious, but pursuit of the opportunity is essential. Only if we can unite around missional plans that employ our differing gifts in sacrifice and service to Kingdom priorities – only then does our church point toward a future that will inspire her people’s zeal and justify her God’s blessing.
II. IDENTIFYING OUR MISSION (understanding “Formal” and “Animating” Values)

“Formal” Values
(Values stated in the approved standards of the church)

The values that frame our mission are both formal and animating. The formal values are found in the standards approved by the church in its legislative processes. These documents interpret the church’s understanding of its Scriptural obligations and have varying levels of authority. Together these documents serve to identify the values that the church has officially agreed will guide its beliefs and practices.

A. The Westminster Confession of Faith (with Larger and Shorter Catechisms)

B. The Book of Church Order

C. Historic Motto:
   Faithful to Scripture
   True to Reformed Faith
   Obedient to Great Commission

D. 2006 Strategic Plan Statement: “A healthy denomination is characterized by…”
   1. Preeminence of Christ
   2. Increasing numbers of healthy churches
   3. Presbyteries involved in cooperative ministry
   4. General Assembly contributing to health of denomination (coordinating resources for effective fulfillment of Great Commission, serving judicatories through committee/agency work, fulfilling appropriate review and oversight functions)
   5. Committees and Agencies effectively carrying out work of GA
"Animating" Values
(The concerns and goals that “get us up and going” each morning)

Though the formal documents that identify our formal values are developed with meticulous care, they are in many ways the broadest expression of our church’s mission priorities. Beyond the formal values that establish the general nature and commitments of the denomination are the “animating values” that stimulate the daily activities of individuals, local churches or groups within the denomination.

A. Animating Values of Local Churches in the PCA

The PCA has historically held that the authority for beliefs or practices not specified in our constitutional standards resides in local leadership. This means that there is considerable diversity in the PCA’s “animating values” – the concerns, goals and practices that get us up and going each morning for the work of our individual presbyteries, ministries and churches. We can often identify a local church’s animating values by having its people identify its primary ministry goals – or, more simply, what do they think are the marks of great ministry. Animating values can appropriately differ given the great variety of contexts in which churches minister. The list below would identify the “animating values” of many local churches in the PCA:

Great ministry in the local church is characterized by . . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>01. Everyone understanding and applying Scripture</th>
<th>15. Supporting Pro-Life movements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02. Perpetuating and refining Reformed Theology</td>
<td>16. Creating Christian community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03. Worshipping God rightly and well</td>
<td>17. Supernaturally renewed relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04. Involving everyone in personal evangelism</td>
<td>18. Securing family/married life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05. Everyone grasping the grace of the Gospel</td>
<td>19. Ministry to the disadvantaged and oppressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06. Multiplying “healthy” churches</td>
<td>20. Racial reconciliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07. Transferring the Faith to the next generation</td>
<td>21. Supporting mission work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08. Right administration of the Sacraments</td>
<td>22. Revival thru viral repentance and faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09. Transforming culture</td>
<td>23. Pervasive prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Good Bible preaching</td>
<td>24. Predominant personal piety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Helping people to love Jesus</td>
<td>25. Separation from unbelief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Reclaiming the nation for Christ</td>
<td>27. Biblical care of hurting people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Supporting Christian artists</td>
<td>28. Other ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. Animating Values of Groups within the PCA

Just as individual churches have animating values, so also do groups of churches or individuals within the denomination. Again, these values are diverse, but because they characterize groups that are often seeking to set direction for others beyond their immediate context or for the denomination as a whole, such values can create tensions with groups who have different animating values. As a consequence, polarities have developed both in what groups identify as their animating values and in how they perceive others.

With apologies for obvious stereotyping, we identify some of these group polarities and perceptions below – not to perpetuate tensions – but to “name the elephants in the room” that must be handled in order for us to pull together for Kingdom purposes. We intend by the labels below to be “equal opportunity offenders,” helping each group to understand its role in the PCA and how that group may be perceived by those with different animating values. Of course, the real goal is not to offend, but to help all see that our differences typically are varying emphases on aspects of the formal values we all affirm.

As with local churches, we can often identify a group’s animating values by having its adherents identify their primary ministry goals (which may or may not be formally stated). The left column of the chart below identifies goals common among groups in the PCA; the left column identifies how others may perceive groups with these ministry goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our primary mission/calling is . . .</th>
<th>Perception of others</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Properly expressing Reformed Theology</td>
<td>(insensitive to relational)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-restore Southern Presbyterianism</td>
<td>[all mind]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ensure doctrinal faithfulness at all levels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reaching the lost</td>
<td>(ignores doctrine &amp; doxological)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-multiply churches</td>
<td>[all heart]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-multiply people in churches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-multiply mission support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Restoring the culture</td>
<td>(idolizes the past &amp; politics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-reclaim nation-founding commitments</td>
<td>[fears future]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-support conservative politics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Protecting the Faithful</td>
<td>(idolizes family/community)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-separate from secular</td>
<td>[fears culture]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-support schooling alternatives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Transforming the Culture</td>
<td>(idolizes external o/ internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-oppose oppression (e.g., poverty, racism)</td>
<td>[forgets spiritual]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-reach “gatekeepers” (e.g., media, arts, profs)</td>
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III. IDENTIFYING OUR CHALLENGES

Because the *animating values* of those in the PCA are so much more diverse than its *formal values*, the PCA has struggled to maximize its organizational strengths. For example, despite our formal values of connectional polity and cooperative ministry, less than half of the churches of the PCA support any denominational agency or committee (less than 20 percent give at the Partnership Share level). Presbyteries are increasingly perceived as mere credentialing bureaus or discipline courts with little ability to unite members in ministry. The cooperative efforts that do exist are often directed toward affinity gatherings or the ministries of large churches that have become missional expressions of the animating values of specific groups.

This is not to suggest that overall there has been a great deal of cooperative effort. We remain an anti-denominational denomination – excusing individualistic ministry by re-telling the narratives of past abuses in former denominations, demonizing denominational leadership or movements to justify non-support of the larger church, or simply making self-survival or self-fulfillment the consuming goal of local church ministry. In these respects we simply reflect the surrounding secular and religious culture where institutional and organizational commitments have been eroded by the demise of family systems and loss of community identity. These losses are exacerbated by economic and technological changes that simultaneously shrink our world and allow each of us to live in personal isolation or in shrinking, special-interest enclaves. However unique we may feel is our struggling to maintain historical distinctions, ministry continuity and generational cohesion, we actually echo struggles occurring in every major Evangelical denomination. The response of most has been to focus increasingly on their own security, not recognizing that (for denominations as well as local churches) allowing people to focus on themselves inevitably destroys the selflessness that is the church’s lifeblood.

In order for those of us in the PCA to see beyond self-interests and to be willing to work cooperatively despite differences in our animating values, we must have a renewed sense of collective mission. The catalytic power of our founding was fueled by a shared zeal to wrest a Biblical church from mainline corruptions. Differing understandings of what it meant to hold to Reformed distinctions in ministry and mission were either unrecognized or suppressed to support the primary mission of combating liberalism. That mission was compelling enough unite us in ministry despite our differences. Willingness now to honor our differences while harnessing our shared blessings will again require a sense of being united in a cause that is of similar Biblical consequence.

Such a cause cannot be concocted from marketing schemes or designed to reflect the ministry preferences of a particular branch of our denomination. The cause that is our present calling must be forged from a comprehensive and realistic understanding of the challenges this generation must face in order to live faithfully before God and for his Kingdom. Some of these challenges are external, thrust upon us by dynamics of our history and culture. Other challenges are of our own making and will have to be honestly faced and fairly handled in order for our church to participate meaningfully in God’s purposes. Such external and internal challenges the
PCA faces are listed below. These lists are not meant to be exhaustive, but rather are intended to help us face the magnitude of our tasks and, consequently, the necessity of facing them together.

**External Challenges**

### A. North American and European Challenges

1. Loss of Christian consensus in West replaced by Naturalistic worldview
2. Dominance of Pluralism and intolerance of religious “preference”
3. “Hidden revival” in immigrant church; church decline in general U.S. culture
4. Mainline church decline
5. Evangelicals now mainline (minority → majority)
   
   (Salvation theology → Kingdom theology)
   (Orthodoxy [Word] → Orthopraxy [deed])
   (Doctrinal consensus → Relational consensus)

   No Protestant faith group rivals Evangelicals in both membership and political influence. Evangelicals have moved from a mid-Twentieth Century minority to an early 21st-Century majority. With majority status has come a shift in emphasis from hope not-of-this-world (Salvation theology) to this-world hope (Kingdom theology). Reacting to self-oriented pietism and consumerism of previous generations, movements as diverse as Focus on the Family and the New Perspective on Paul have argued the Gospel requires Christians to engage in some form of cultural transformation. Orthodoxy (the right proclamation of the Word) has been deemed impossible without orthopraxy (the the right practice of the Word). With the diminished emphasis on the Word, Evangelicalism has become a much broader tent theologically, embracing those who both in doctrine and lifestyle choices differ widely from previous generations. Evangelical leaders and laypersons are paying less and less attention to denominational lines and distinctives, but while trying to survive in an increasingly secular culture that views the church as either irrelevant or polarizing.

6. Evangelicals strongly divided over Formal (let’s be church) vs. Informal (let’s be real) worship practices (differences are not strictly generational)
7. **Evangelical generational divides** (Builders vs. Boomers vs. Gen-X; e.g. zeal for programmatic evangelism vs. relational evangelism; antipathy to vs. acceptance of pop culture; differing socio-political agendas – see below)
   
   **Builders/Boomers** = Constraint Theology (STOP abortion, homosexuality, pornography, immigration, minimum wage, etc.)
   **Busters/X-ers/ Millennials** = Compassion Theology (HELP poor, discriminated, AIDS victims, refugees, environment, etc.)
8. Dominant influence of parachurch for diaconal and mission work
9. Rise of Emergent Church in West (Proclamation emphasis → Incarnation emphasis)
10. Youth exodus of Western Church and modern Evangelicalism
11. Rising generation financial stress, and sense of having been denied earlier generations’ privileges
12. Postmodern philosophies and mindset (subjective truth; narrative vs. didactic learning)
13. Orality and visual literacy of Western youth culture and Developing World
14. Pervasive Biblical/doctrinal Illiteracy (all generations)

15. Birth control-abortion normalized
16. Traditional family decline (divorce, delayed adolescence, delayed marriages, starter marriages, pervasive pornography, working parents, absent fathers, abuse)
17. Gender Roles re-definition and confusion (more than Feminism per se)

18. **Transition from Anglo-majority culture in U.S.**
19. Transition to No-growth Economies in Western Europe as Birth Rates Fall among All But Immigrant (Muslim, African and Asian) Populations
B. Global Challenges

1. Most rapid growth of Christianity in world history
2. Re-centering of global Christianity and missionary origins (viz. Southern hemispheres Christianity)
3. Conservatism of Developing World church vs. Liberalism of Western church (e.g. African Anglican communions leading efforts to combat North American homosexual agendas and Islamic expansionism).
4. Majority World church deserving and demanding influence on global Christianity development and doctrine with significant challenges ahead, e.g., Male and female leadership of Chinese Church vs. Male leadership of Developing World church vs. Male and female leadership of Western mainline & new Evangelicals vs. Male leadership of PCA).

5. Expanse of Global Pentecostalism
6. Rise of Radical Islam (Hinduism) fueled by economic/political inequities
7. Rise of Alternative Spiritualities (as major world religions all dominated by materialistic nominalism)

9. Class stratification deepening (poverty and ethnic divides)
10. Resource concentrations increasing (oil, wealth, population, food, medicine)
11. Third World debt increasing and leading to greater disparities (and antipathies)
12. Waning impact of U.S. on global economy (and interdependence of all economies)
13. Fracturing of European Union
14. Increase of national economies dependent on drug, weapon and sex trades
15. Worldwide recession affecting church giving, staffing and mission support

16. The “Chinese-century” ahead
17. Chinese aggression concerns for Soviet and Central Asia (one-child, birth-control policy favoring males will lead to an excess of 70 million unmarried males of military age within 20 years)
18. Russian Federation re-militarization
19. Middle-east destabilization continuing with possible nuclear threats (especially as oil depletes and/or Western economies become less oil dependent)
20. African ethnic struggles destabilizing continent (allowing Islamic, Russian and Chinese encroachments)
21. World urbanization and Giga-cities (but in U.S. growth continues to be Suburban as inner cities and rural areas empty with few exceptions)
22. Technological/Informational acceleration and world compression
23. Influence of Western entertainment/pop culture dominant in Developing World
24. Aging (and decline) of Industrialized-world population vs. Youth-ifying of Majority-world population
25. Sex trafficking the modern slavery dilemma
The magnitude of the external challenges listed above should make it apparent that the temporal powers of our church are not the ultimate answers to our world’s problems. While the church cannot simultaneously ignore the world’s current problems and minister in Christ’s name, her energies will be consumed in futility if she perceives her primary mandate to be re-creating Eden with earthly resources. Jesus said that his Kingdom was not of this world, that we would always have the poor with us, and that his people would face suffering until his return. The ultimate mandate of the church is not to fix a fallen world, but to give God’s people rest and rescue from its corruptions. This is done by honoring, proclaiming and demonstrating the truths of God’s eternal love. God’s people give these truths credibility by the way we worship Him according to his Word and serve as salt and light in the world.

With God’s blessing our efforts can truly be culturally transformative, and the cultural mandate of Scripture obligates God’s people to bring the light of the Gospel and the demands of Christ’s Lordship into every inch of the world over which they have influence. Yet, the priority of the Gospel remains spiritual transformation through which cultural transformation may come but by which eternal security assuredly comes. This spiritual priority by no means lessens the concern or obligation of the church to seek peace and justice in the world. Rather this spiritual priority reflects the Biblical understanding that, through its transformed people, the church of Jesus Christ is the most powerful change agent in any society – whether religious, secular or pluralistic. When a community of believers lives faithful to the Gospel – loving one another, forgiving one another, helping the helpless, loving enemies, sacrificing for the undeserving, honoring Christ, sharing his claims for this world, and living with confidence in the blessings of the next – then, Christ’s Spirit becomes evident and moves across society as he intends.

Our obligation is not to demand that the Spirit move according to our design or timing, but to be vessels for his wisdom and work. As jars of clay, we should expect that our efforts will sometimes be flawed. Still, we are a branch of the visible church through which the Spirit brings his transformation and should expect that God will use us as we seek to serve him in humility and repentance. True humility will require understanding that we are not the only branch of his church through which God will work, and also acknowledgement of the many challenges for which our wisdom alone is insufficient. True repentance will require confession of weakness and sin that are evident in many of our internal challenges. These internal challenges are now listed not to discourage or blame, but to enable us to address what we must in order to be a worthy vessel for God’s transforming work of souls and society:

1. **Slowed Growth with Lack of “Rallying” Strategic Plan** (key influencers also “burned” by previous 2000-2006 Strategic Plan Process)
2. Predominantly Small Churches Struggling to Survive (49% of churches have less than 120 members; 20% have less than 50 members; only 8% have more than 500 members)
3. Anti-denominational Historical Context and Post-denominational Present Context
4. Loss of Denominational Heritage, Knowledge and Identity with Passing of Denominational “Fathers”

5. **Culture of Suspicion and Caricature Perpetuated by Past Narratives** (e.g., encroaching liberalism, insensitive bureaucracies, racist agendas, big steeple power) and Present Divisions (see below):
   a. **Have and Have-not Divisions** (size, salaries, recognition, influence)
   b. **Generational Divides**: Builders/Boomers=Institutional priorities; Gen-X=Relational priorities (See earlier discussion of Evangelical generational divide)
   c. **Regional Divides** (Southern identity; Northeastern; and Western autonomy)
   d. **Perspectival Divides** (Creating false and destructive dichotomies)
      - Aggressive TRs (eradicating unReformed) vs. Cynical Progressives (abandoning Reformed)
      - Doctrinalists (theological-erosion policemen) vs. Missionalists (reaching-the-lost pragmatists)
      - Southern Presbyterian Theology vs. Continental Reformed Theology vs. Broadly Evangelical
      - Traditionalists (prioritize traditional churches) vs. Emergents (prioritize relational churches)
      - Fundamentalists (piety removed from culture) vs. Transformationists (piety traded for culture)
      - Planters (entrepreneurs and innovators) vs. Providers (structure maintainers and shepherds)
      - Younger pastors (desiring mentors and shared leadership with peers, not RE’s) vs. Older Pastors (desiring authority and shared leadership with RE’s)

6. **Pervasive Disregard for Eph. 4:15 and Matthew 18 in Discussions of Differences**
   Our organizational cohesion has not primarily been achieved by shared mission goals, ministry practice, organizational support, worship style, ethnicity, political perspectives or economic status – but by doctrinal agreement. The downside of so valuing doctrine is that we have little tolerance within or without the church for theological variance. Our tendency is not simply to consider those who differ with us wrong – but to consider them bad (because they are obviously “compromisers” or “unbiblical”). It is easy for us to give moral status to our theological perspective – even on secondary issues, and thus rationalize uncharitable characterizations of those who differ (esp. on blogs)

7. **Decline of Confidence in Presbyteries for Pastoral Support or Cooperative Ministry**

8. **Rise of Networks for Fellowship/Perspective Affiliation**

9. **Disinterest in (and suspicion of) General Assembly Structures, Positions and Participants** (dissatisfaction among young Progressives resulting in a few departures and many discussions, as with TR’s in previous decade)

10. **Committee/Agency Non-Support**
    - Competition re: resources/recognition
    - Doubts re: effectiveness and leadership
    - Concerns re: relational harmony/cooperation

11. **Maintaining Biblical Worship with Cultural Diversity**
12. Ethnic Homogeneity both in General Membership and Denominational Leadership (with vestiges of racism despite strong Korean presence)

13. Most Members and Leaders with Little Exposure to Other Cultures or the Global Church

14. Significant Consternation Regarding How to Do Theological Reflection in Confessional Church

15. Maintaining Biblical Standards While Encouraging Women to Minister in the Church (and how to discuss this without being caricatured chauvinist or liberal; and how to relate to Evangelicals who differ with PCA standards)

16. Generational Divide among Women re: Responsibilities in Church, Workplace and Home (these are not typically issues related to ordination but to contribution and significance)

17. Loss of Youth (secular culture and denominational disinterest causing many of our children to leave the PCA – and the visible church)

18. Lack of Desire among Young Leaders to Assume Positions with PCA’s Most Significant Pulpits and Organizations (perception that they are moribund and dangerous for families)
IV. IDENTIFYING OUR OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CULTURE

The external challenges listed earlier in this plan should not blind us to the opportunities for Gospel progress that are also present. Because all people are made in the image of God the aspects of their culture that oppose the Gospel inevitably disclose aspects of human need. Thus, the fractures of a culture are openings for the Gospel, revealing where hearts are hurting, longing, empty and open. Below are some indications of Gospel opportunities in our culture:

1. Pervasive Spiritual Longing Evident in Explosion of Alternative Spiritualities
2. Relational Longing (due to loss of community, family and fathering)
3. Longing for Something “Certain” Evident in Rise in North American Catholicism, Islam and Ancient/Future Worship
4. Longing for Racial Reconciliation
5. Cultural Regard for Piety that is Humble and Non-judgmental (e.g. Mother Teresa)
6. Appreciation for Biblical Preaching among “Churched” and “Once-churched”
7. Lack of “Grace Understanding” in Christian Media and Most Pulpits
8. Rapid Spread of Global Christianity (often through Pentecostal prosperity gospel, with which there is growing disenchantment)
9. Disappointments in Post-modernism
10. Loss of Confidence in Economy, Experts and Government
11. Lack of Institutional or Denominational Loyalty (especially among young)
12. Fear of Terrorism and War
V. IDENTIFYING OUR RESOURCES/STRENGTHS

The internal challenges listed earlier in this plan should not blind us to the resources and strengths we possess for Gospel progress. God does not leave us helpless in the face of challenges or without resources to pursue Gospel opportunities. The PCA has been richly blessed with means to confront challenges and to pursue Gospel opportunities that God reveals to us. Below are some of the PCA’s significant resources and strengths:

1. “They Preach the Bible Here…..”
   (The vast majority of people who attend our churches are drawn to the PCA because of the belief that we are committed to proclaiming the truth of Scripture.)

2. Theological Cohesion, Soundness and Depth
   (Despite our internal debates, the breadth of theological difference among us is quite small on the theological spectrum. In addition, we generally share an appreciation for the necessity of Word and deed in faithful witness of the Gospel)

3. Historical Emphasis upon the Gospel of Grace
4. History and Expectation of Growth
5. History of Valuing Mission
6. History of Valuing Cultural Influence
7. History of Planting Churches (esp. suburban)
8. Large and Well Supported Mission Agency
9. Sound and Solid Educational Institutions (providing value continuity)
10. Theological Respect for PCA in Broader Evangelicalism (except for actual position on women and perceived position on race)
11. Connectional Theology (despite non-connectional practice)
12. Cultural Niche for “Traditional” and “Family Focused” Churches (the downside obviously is our limited connection with non-churched or unwed persons)
13. Significant Denominational Support from Most Mid-size and Large Churches
14. Good Will of Most Congregants and Pastors (delighting to be in the PCA)
15. Large and Well Organized Women’s Organization
16. RUF
17. Openness to Ethnic Diversity (despite lack of accomplishments)
18. Key Innovator Churches and Leaders (Perimeter, Redeemer, New City, New Life, Seven Rivers, Harbor, Southwest Church Planting Network, etc.)
19. Support and Growth of National Seminary and Associated Seminaries
20. Pockets of Strong Children and Youth Ministry
21. Willing workers Among Growing Retiree Population
22. Significant PCA Representation in Leadership of Major Evangelical Organizations
VI. Questions to Address in Making Strategic Plans for the PCA

The questions below identify issues that should be addressed by a Strategic Plan for the PCA in light of the preceding analysis. Most questions were suggested by the 2008 Cooperative Ministries Committee after reviewing the analysis. Additional questions were added by 2008 General Assembly commissioners who attended its Strategic Planning Seminar and also reviewed the preceding analysis. The questions are not arranged in any priority order.

1. **How to Provide Safe Places** to Talk about New Ideas to Advance the PCA’s Faithfulness to Biblical Belief, Ministry and Mission

2. **How to Provide “More Seats at the Table”** (especially younger leaders, women, and ethnic leaders) for PCA Ministry Direction and Development

3. **How to Identify and Support Agencies/Institutions** Most Critical to Our Calling

4. **How to Do Mission Corporately and Globally** (this includes learning *from* the Global Church, as well unifying ourselves to minister *to* and *with* the Global church)

5. **How to Understand, Appreciate and Utilize Our Differences/Gifts**

6. **How to Work and Worship with Gospel Co-laborers** outside the PCA (i.e., working out what Reformed Catholicity means; esp. defining “field” and “fences” of cooperation) in Order to Fulfill the Highest Kingdom Purposes

7. **How to Ensure a Common Commitment among PCA Leaders** Regarding Theological Approaches to Ministry and Mission

8. **How to Inspire Involvement in Corporate Church Structures and Efforts** (i.e., Acting in Consistency with Our Connectional Theology)

9. **How to Encourage Mutual Love and Respect among Committees and Agencies**

10. **How to Inspire and Engage Churches and Presbyteries in a Global Strategy**

11. **How to Prepare Ordained Leadership for Immigrant and Ethnic Communities** not Traditionally PCA

12. **How to Provide Unity within Variety regarding Worship Principles**
VII. Strategic Plans for the PCA

See plans in charted form on following pages.
## THEME 1: SAFE PLACES

**Goal:** Establish safe places to talk about ways to advance Biblical Belief, Ministry & Mission

**Means #1:** Public forums at GA to test ideas without vote or risk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives:</th>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>External</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Avoid unbalanced splinter discussions</td>
<td>- Strengthen church by surfacing appropriate innovation and challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Avoid perception of crushing dissent</td>
<td>- Opportunity to listen to ideas not native to our culture or tradition</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Church able to correct itself, and fulfilling “always being reformed”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Provide for theological reflection in a Confessional context</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Create enthusiasm &amp; interest for our ecclesiastical assemblies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Use our doctrinal discussion strengths to explore full dimensions of Biblical faith and practice</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Inspire &amp; unite church re: important new practices, insights, threats or opportunities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Give minority voices opportunities to make their case without threat</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Ensure wider understanding &amp; commitment to theoretical &amp; theological approaches</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps:</th>
<th>Resources:</th>
<th>Timing:</th>
<th>Responsible:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Establish “prime time” forums at GA with discussion guidelines (e.g. tentative opinions allowed, personal attack prohibited, proof required, nothing chargeable in this context)</td>
<td>1. Room set up at GA</td>
<td>June 2011</td>
<td>Stated Clerk w/ Local Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. CMC identifies up to 5 potential issues each year; Final topic voted on byFaith online, post CMC</td>
<td>2. Potential topics chosen</td>
<td>January 2011</td>
<td>CMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. CMC picks forum moderator to enforce guidelines (2011 ff.)</td>
<td>3. Forum speakers &amp; moderator suggested</td>
<td>Spring 2011</td>
<td>CMC polled by Stated Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Encourage presbyteries to suggest topics to the CMC for future GA</td>
<td>4. Forum speakers &amp; moderator invited (after CMC approval)</td>
<td>Spring 2011</td>
<td>Stated Clerk; as to Step 4, Presbytery Stated Clerks and moderators with Presbytery Planning Committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Written guidelines</td>
<td>5. Written guidelines</td>
<td>Spring 2011</td>
<td>AC drafted; GA approved (overtured by a presbytery, if necessary)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positives:</th>
<th>Negatives:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Cross-pollinating with global church</td>
<td>- Falsehood creep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fortifies trust &amp; unity</td>
<td>- Greatest credence to best speakers vs. best ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Surface fresh ideas</td>
<td>- Potential relational casualties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Iron sharpening iron</td>
<td>- Speaker/issue support creating party spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Place to encourage multi-generational voices</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Early exposure to potential threats</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Test &amp; get feedback on ideas prior to formal proposals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Address dissent rather than making it subversive</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Learn corporately</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Opportunity to grow in understanding &amp; appreciating differing opinions/gifts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Opportunity more accurately to define our theological breadth &amp; boundaries</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Opportunity to dispel rumor, gossip &amp; false characterizations</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Means #2: Encourage similar forums in presbyteries (possibly continuing discussion from each year’s GA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encourage annual discussion retreats of presbyteries</td>
<td>One presbytery meeting per year</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Presbyteries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Means #3: Encourage gatherings of non-agreeing enclaves to discuss major denomination- or culture-changing ideas; and how to live together with differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Encourage annual discussions outside GA held on neutral ground | - Overnight travel & hotel  
- Church meeting place | Annual | Leader churches, networks and presbyteries acting out of selfless desire to promote the progress of the church |
### THEME 2: MORE SEATS

#### Goal:
More seats at the table; especially younger generation, women, ethnic leaders, global church representatives

#### Means (General):
Representatives from constituencies vital to the church’s future involved with denominational leadership (e.g., advisory voice on committees, sessions, Boards, speaking at gatherings, consulted by presbyteries; employed in non-ordained ministries)

#### Objectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External</th>
<th>Internal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Have contributions of ethnic minorities & global church leaders expand perspectives, ministries & influence | - Gain insight & perspective from voices important to church’s future  
- Retain & mentor future leaders  
- Have contributions of women strengthen PCA ministry |

#### Positives:
- Retain involvement of future leaders  
- Retain PCA members concerned re parochialism & prejudice  
- Affirm & utilize gifts of women, minorities & global leaders  
- Unite our efforts with Spirit’s movement in Global Church

#### Negatives:
- Give leadership voice to inexperienced  
- Lose PCA members concerned about compromise & political correctness

#### Means (Specific #1):
Invite younger generational leaders onto GA Boards & committees (esp. for specific initiatives)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective:</th>
<th>Retain &amp; mentor future leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Steps:     | Resources:  
Create consensus & approval for this objective by passing this Strategic Plan at GA, affecting nominations at all levels  
- Boards & GA Nominating Committee agreement that generational diversity should be considered along with regional and ethnic diversity |Timing: ASAP  
Responsible:  
- Committees & Agencies  
- CMC accountability review  
- GA Nominating Committee  
- Presbytery Stated Clerks and nominations |

#### Positives:
- Leadership succession  
- Denominational continuity & understanding  
- Gain multi-generational insights needed for contemporary ministry

#### Negatives:
- Introduce unqualified opinions to leadership  
- Create quota mindset

#### Means (Specific #2):
Encourage multi-generational gatherings with mentors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective:</th>
<th>Same as above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Steps:     | Resources  
Create consensus & approval for this objective by passing this Strategic Plan at GA  
- Organizers  
- Hotel/travel costs  
- Meeting places |Timing: ASAP  
Responsible:  
- Committees, Agencies, Institutions - Large churches  
- Presbyteries - GA organizers  
- Established leaders - Local churches providing pastors & elders, time, travel & hotel costs |

#### Positives:
Same as above

#### Negatives:
Same as above

#### Means (Specific #3):
Invite ethnic & global leaders to address GA, presbytery & local church gatherings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective:</th>
<th>Same as above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Steps:     | Resources  
Invite ethnic & global leaders to address GA, presbytery & church gatherings  
Travel, housing & honoraria expenses |Timing: ASAP  
Responsible:  
- Committees & Agencies, Presbyteries - Local Churches with Mission Conferences |

#### Positives:
See general positives above

#### Negatives:
See general negatives above
### Means (Specific #4): Establish standards for voluntary certification of men and women for specific non-ordained vocational ministries

**Objectives:**
- Endorse the importance of lay men’s and lay women’s gifts in non-ordained church ministry
- Gain the insights & contributions of lay men and lay women for our ministries
- Protect the insights & contributions of lay men and lay women for our ministries

**Steps:**
1. CEP, RUM, Covenant College, & Covenant Seminary jointly test theological & practical preparation
2. Presbyteries & regional CEP Women’s Ministries experientially examine & certify

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- GA approval of this Strategic Plan</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>GA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Joint meeting of CEP Women’s Ministries, Covenant College &amp; Seminary Christian Ed Departments to design testing</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>CEP Women’s Ministries, Covenant College &amp; Covenant Seminary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Continuing administration by CEP Women’s ministries &amp; Presbyteries</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>CEP Women’s Ministries &amp; Presbyteries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Positives:**
- See general positives above
- Clarify non-ordained ministry functions approved by the church at large
- Make vocational ministry for women credible & viable in united church effort
- Unite Committees & Agencies in common cause

**Negatives:**
See general negatives above

### Means (Specific #5): Formalize CEP Women’s Ministries organization for women in vocational ministries

**Objectives:**
Create avenues for women’s input, encouragement and leadership development for appropriate PCA ministry efforts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEP Women’s Ministries Provision at Annual Leadership Training</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>CEP Women’s Ministries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Positives:**
See general positives above

**Negatives:**
See general negatives above

### Means (Specific #6): Credible & Rigorous Alternative ordination credentialing of men for disadvantaged constituencies

**Objectives:**
- Significantly enable the PCA to minister Reformed distinctives beyond North American, Anglo suburbia
- Learn from leaders outside our tradition how to minister Biblically beyond our cultural models

**Steps:**
1. Have a joint committee of Covenant Seminary, CEP, MNA and MTW establish certification standards for non-traditional clergy preparation that includes formal & prior earning assessment
2. Have GA approve appropriate guidelines for presbyteries to consider in evaluating alternative ordination preparation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting places, travel, housing expenses</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Covenant Seminary, CEP, MNA, &amp; MTW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>GA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Plan</td>
<td>PCA</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3. Establish an endorsement coordinator (similar to Chaplains &amp; RUF) under MNA to advise ordinands &amp; presbyteries regarding appropriate non-traditional credentialing paths.</strong></td>
<td>MNA fundraising</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Facilitate recognition of appropriate alternative credentialing programs by establishing standards for GA endorsement of all programs and seminaries by a joint committee of MNA, Covenant Seminary, CEP &amp; MTW; these standards would advise presbyteries re appropriate alternative credentialing standards</strong></td>
<td>Same as for step #1 above</td>
<td>2011-2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Positives:**
- Prepare the PCA to minister beyond the as-of-2030 Anglo minority in North America
- Provide an expanded & diverse Reformed clergy for ministry challenges of burgeoning Christian Church worldwide
- Unite GA Committees & Agencies in common cause

**Negatives:**
Potential or perceived “shortcuts” in ministry preparation will produce an ill-prepared and/or perceived “second-class” ministry
## THEME 3: IN GOD’S GLOBAL MISSION

### Goal:
Participate in God’s Global Mission with Exemplary Unity, Humility & Effectiveness  

### Means (General):
Provide internal means & will to make the PCA a significant contributor to God’s Global Mission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives:</th>
<th>Resources:</th>
<th>Timing:</th>
<th>Responsible:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>External</strong></td>
<td>GA seminar time slots, Committees &amp; Agencies personnel commitment &amp; time</td>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>Covenant Seminary, Covenant College, MTW, MNA, RUM, CEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Participate meaningfully in the largest expansion of Christianity in world history</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Salt the world movement of Christianity with sound Biblical teaching</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Learn from the global church Biblical truths beneficial to our own growth in God’s purposes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Internal</strong></td>
<td>MTW, RUM &amp; MNA &amp; leader churches personnel commitment &amp; time</td>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>Covenant Seminary, Covenant College, RUM, MTW &amp; MNA with leader churches, GA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Develop a sense of unifying purpose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Refine/strengthen PCA structures &amp; practices to fulfill that unifying purpose</td>
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### Means (Specific #1a):
Identify & support national & international efforts that develop Gospel eco-systems (e.g. church-mercy-evangelism; church-school-community mission; church-arts/media-outreach; church-university ministry-discipleship)

### Means (Specific #1b):
Fund joint research of Covenant College & Covenant Seminary, CEP, MTW & MNA re: the most effective Gospel eco-systems and how to multiply them beyond the PCA

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Objectives:</th>
<th>Resources:</th>
<th>Timing:</th>
<th>Responsible:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>External</strong></td>
<td>MTW, RUM &amp; MNA &amp; leader churches personnel commitment &amp; time</td>
<td>2011-2021</td>
<td>Covenant Seminary, Covenant College, RUM, MTW &amp; MNA &amp; leader churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Support most Biblical means for spiritual &amp; cultural transformation: the church</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Make the Gospel spiritually transformative by church ministry of Word &amp; sacrament</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Make church ministry credible by addressing fallen aspects of the culture</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal</strong></td>
<td>MTW, MNA, RUM, Covenant College &amp; Covenant Seminary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Transform culture by the body of Christ’s salt &amp; light ministry through the culture, affecting souls &amp; practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Unify PCA committees &amp; constituencies in a truly Reformational mission effort</td>
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### Steps:

1. **GA seminars coordinated by MTW, MNA, RUM, CEP**
   - Covenant College & Covenant Seminary on the potential influence of Gospel eco-systems support

2. **MTW, RUM, & MNA propose focus on Gospel eco-systems for GA approval**
   - MTW, RUM & MNA & leader churches personnel commitment & time

3. **MTW, RUM, & MNA 10-year plan for Gospel eco-system development**
   - Major fundraising & personnel resourcing MTW, MNA, RUM, Covenant College & Covenant Seminary

4. **Covenant College & Covenant Seminary report & publish research regarding multiplying Gospel eco-systems**

### Positives:
- Multiply Gospel saturated churches
- Multiply Gospel-understanding believers
- Contribute to Gospel-transformation of cultures

### Negatives:
- Potential distraction from eternal priorities
- Potential drift into social gospel

### Means (Specific #2): Develop a “unifying” (not unified) funding means to support PCA ministries and mission culture; features to include:

a. Ability for all churches, presbyteries, delegated REs and TEs to participate (e.g. annual registration fees to support AC, erase GA fees)

b. Necessity of all who are PCA to participate at meaningful level

c. Non-participants with voice but without vote at GA

d. All other Committees and Agencies, other than AC would continue to be funded by Partnership Shares and Ministry Asks.
**Objectives:**

**External**
- Provide adequate funding for corporate efforts in ministry & mission

**Internal**
- Negate self-defeating individualism of many PCA churches
- Create a denominational “can-do” spirit for God’s purposes, making zeal for being PCA infectious and inspiring for present & future generations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Pass this proposed Strategic Plan at GA</td>
<td>CMC vote &amp; Admin. Committee propose to GA</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>CMC thru Admin. Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. AC propose necessary BCO and RAO changes for GA approval</td>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Stated Clerk and AC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Stated Clerk’s Office assess &amp; record registration fees; determining TEs eligible for higher court vote (all would have voice) and GA fee waiver; collecting addresses for free ByFaith provision.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Stated Clerk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Positives:**
- Funding for PCA coordination
- All churches participating in a united effort that benefits all and the whole church’s mission
- Ministers acting in concert with their Presbyterian convictions
- Help present and future generations grasp the power of “working together” in God’s mission

**Negatives:**
- Stress pastors and churches in economic distress
- Constrain some churches to support efforts not appreciated
- Seem to abandon “voluntary” nature of historic PCA affiliation
- Potential loss of churches not wanting to participate in PCA connectionalism

**Means (Specific #3): Provide mechanism to identify and support only GA ministries most critical to our calling**

- The mechanism for evaluation is to be worked out in proposal form by the Coordinators, referred to the CMC and presented to the GA within 3 yrs.

**Objectives:**

**External**
- Focus limited resources on ministries most needed & able to fulfill our calling

**Internal**
- Continuously structure GA Committees & Agencies for ministries the church believes are “doing the job” that most needs doing by those most able to do it

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Adopt the Strategic Plan with the principles of unifying funding approach. 2. If needed, revise RAO to set up procedure and sequence for committee and agency evaluation process</td>
<td>CMC &amp; GA approval of Strategic Plan RAO provisions</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>CMC, GA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CMC, Stated Clerk &amp; AC efforts &amp; time to design</td>
<td>2011-2013</td>
<td>CMC, Stated Clerk &amp; AC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GA approval</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>GA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Positives:**
- Build confidence in denominational efforts
- Provide level of accountability that diminishes cynicism & increases support
- Provide mechanisms to alter ministries that do not have significant denominational support

**Negatives:**
- Politicize Committees and Agencies
- Distract Committees & Agencies from mission
- Fuel culture of fear & suspicion
Means (Specific #4): Partner with national & international ministries with whom we can most effectively participate in God’s global mission

- Seek union or appropriate levels of cooperation with Reformed movements making Gospel progress and in harmony with our ethos & goals
- Withdraw from organizations with whom we share doctrinal history, but not ministry priorities currently draining our ministry energies (e.g., NAPARC)
- Find new ways to give away our knowledge & resources to bodies of believers being spiritually blessed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives:</th>
<th>External</th>
<th>Internal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Serve God’s global mission with greatest effectiveness</td>
<td>- Serve God’s global mission with greatest effectiveness</td>
<td>- Learn from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Make as meaningful as possible the oneness of the Body of Christ</td>
<td>- Make as meaningful as possible the oneness of the Body of Christ</td>
<td>- Cooperate with others whose efforts will work synergistically with ours for Gospel progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Help others</td>
<td>- Help others</td>
<td>- Define field and fences of appropriate cooperation with bodies whose Gospel development would benefit by our involvement even if they are still organizationally or doctrinally developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps:</th>
<th>Resources:</th>
<th>Timing:</th>
<th>Responsible:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. GA approve Strategic plan</td>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Convene a committee of MNA, MTW, Stated Clerk, Covenant College &amp; Covenant Seminary to determine:</td>
<td>Transportation, housing, meeting costs</td>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>MNA, MTW, Covenant College &amp; Covenant Seminary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Field &amp; fences of appropriate cooperative &amp; union efforts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GA, Inter-church Relations, MNA, MTW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Appropriate parties or target efforts for cooperative ministry efforts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Present to CMC plans for cooperative policies &amp; plans for GA approval</td>
<td></td>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>Committees and Agencies reporting to CMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. CMC forwards policies &amp; plans to AC for GA approval</td>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>AC &amp; GA</td>
</tr>
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Positives: - Create enthusiasm for participation in God’s global purposes - Demonstrate unity of the Body of Christ - Gain Gospel understanding - Benefit from Christ-like selflessness - Further our Gospel efforts by participation with those who can help us progress - Salt the global mission with Reformed theology - Expand our understanding of, and ministry among, those in rapidly expanding global church - not being left behind in parochial concerns

Negatives: - Potential compromise of doctrinal distinctives - Use of PCA resources for non-PCA efforts
VIII. Conclusion

The mission and calling of the PCA must be seen both in the light of our Reformed heritage and in the light of the needs of our rapidly changing world. Reformed theologian Bill Edgar captures these priorities well in these words from *Truth in All It’s Glory* that may surprise us, will encourage us and should challenge us:

Today the Reformed faith is truly worldwide. In its different modes, the Reformed outlook has found its way into more cultures and places than any other expression of the Christian faith, including the Roman Catholic tradition. From the outset, the intention and deepest motive of Reformed thinking has been global. Since the Second World War, and now into the twenty-first century, Reformed theology has interacted with numerous world trends. One of them is the continuing process of independence from the West. No longer tied to the civilizing arm of colonial expansion, evangelism and missions have developed an independent character, with national leadership. Missions today are more a partnership than a one-way street.

Every indication points to the shifting center of gravity in the presence and life of the Christian church from the Northern to the Southern Hemisphere. The Reformed churches are no exception. In some cases, extraordinary growth has characterized them on various continents, even as they decline in the West. Today, the Reformed churches in Africa, Asia, and Latin America far outnumber the churches in Europe, North America, South Africa and Oceania. This growth is especially felt in the major cities of the world.…

Reformed theology has unique experience in formulating matters of faith in multiple contexts. The Western churches, having a certain longevity and having faced modernity, with more or less success still have something to say to their non-Western partners. And while Reformed theology in the future should by no means be restricted to its Western formulations, even less to its sixteenth- or seventeenth-century documents, it would be absurd to neglect them and reinvent the wheel. Together, then, the churches around the world, particularly the Reformed churches, should address the perennial task of being in the world but not of it. They are to “grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love” (Eph. 4:15-16)....

The task is also daunting because while the occasion for doing theology is the particular and historical circumstances of those who are generating it, the aim of theology is to speak God’s truth. The world in the Northern Hemisphere and in the twenty-first century is no longer the world of the sixteenth-century
Reformation. We are postcolonial, the Cold War is over, human rights are fully recognized by international organizations, we are laden with technology, we face the AIDS pandemic, third-world debt, terrorism. A theology that does not grapple with those realities may have virtue, but it will not be fully Reformed, in that it will not apply the eternal Word to the changing world. At the same time, a theology that does not construct a universal, normative account of God’s revelation will be less than good theology. It will have no real authority, because it will ultimately begin from our circumstances and attempt to make sense of God’s Word in the their light, rather than beginning with God’s Word and making sense of the circumstances in its light (pgs. 91-98).

The circumstances facing the PCA are changing more rapidly than even these wise words describe. We can either wilt before the challenge or count it our privilege to unite as a church to learn afresh how to live the truth of the Gospel before and for this world. This strategic plan is designed to be an initial step in considering how to participate meaningfully in God’s mission for the world of our time and for generations to come. We have been given the great grace of a Reformed heritage, the great blessing of churches committed to Gospel progress, and the great aid of the Spirit of God. To these gifts God has also added the privilege of scriptural revelation telling us that the Church of Jesus Christ is the most powerful agent of transformation for the world. God has blessed us to be a faithful arm of that church. May he now give us grace to live, learn and disciple in faithfulness to this knowledge with the resources he has given for his glory.