

**ITEM P.204**  
**INFORMATION ITEM**  
**“All Agency” Review Committee**  
Fact Sheet

**Short name:** All Agency Review Committee

**Formal name:** Committee on Review of Whole of the PC(USA).

**Long formal name:** “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”

**History:** Created by GA in 2008, as part of the recommendation of that year’s Presbyterian Mission Agency (then General Assembly Council) Review Committee.

**Frequency:** scheduled to take place at the conclusion of a full cycle of agency reviews, every 8 years.

2006-2008	OGA and PMA reviews
2008-2010	Review of the Whole of the PC(USA)
2010-2012	PPC and PILP reviews
2012-2014	BOP and FDN reviews
2014-2016	OGA and PMA reviews
2016-2018	Review of the Whole of the PC(USA) ( <i>scheduled</i> )
2018-2020	PPC and PILP reviews ( <i>scheduled</i> )
2020-2022	BOP and FDN reviews ( <i>scheduled</i> )
2022-2024	OGA and PMA reviews ( <i>scheduled</i> )
2024-2026	Review of the Whole of the PCUSA ( <i>scheduled</i> )

Rationale from 2008 for creating this review of the whole:

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 review 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 PMA and the Office of the General Assembly (OGA).

(*Minutes*, 2008, Part I, pp. 727–28) The mission of each agency is aligned with the goals and values of the overall mission of the PC(USA) as set by GA directives.

- B. The agencies have leaders at key positions who set the vision, direction, and culture of collaboration as a strategic priority.
- C. The agencies press beyond communication and consultation to genuine collaboration and, where appropriate and/or directed by GA, agree to shared agendas and work together toward fulfillment of shared goals. Individual agencies avoid unilateral decisions, made without consultation and collaboration, which affect all agencies and the whole church.
- D. Each agency maintains open and regular communication with, and provides timely and appropriate access to information to, other agencies and PC(USA) constituencies, including MGBs.
- E. The agencies are aware of agreed processes for problem-solving and non-adversarial dispute resolution within the structure of the PC(USA).
- F. Each agency has conducted a thorough evaluation of the potential gains and risks associated with collaborative endeavors.
- G. Agencies show clear evidence that they collaborate in a spirit of mutual appreciation, trust, and respect with shared understandings of the nature of their collaboration.
- H. Agencies seek pragmatic solutions to their respective operational challenges by relying on the assets, resources, and strengths of other agencies.
- I. Agencies deliver inclusive communication resources (printed and electronic) that meet accessibility standards. Accessibility standards include, but are not limited to: awareness of audience's level of familiarity with content of communication; facilitation of the reader/listener/observer's easy navigation through information; appealing and attention-grabbing resources; and comprehensive information that provides clues for follow-up and referral (i.e. links to other agencies).

Recommendations from the 2010 Review: <https://pc-biz.org/#/search/3311>

The Review Committee sees a **desperate need for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**—through the General Assembly and its agencies, as well as other governing bodies—**to enthusiastically claim its identity and clearly define its mission. It is not our task as a committee to do this. It is the task of the whole church, a task of discernment, grounded in worship, study of Scripture, and prayer.** This is a task that never ends, for which the General Assembly can and must provide leadership. **Once we claim that identity and our particular mission, however timeless or time-bound they may be, we need to clearly, creatively, and expansively communicate them to the whole church so that all can joyfully and effectively work together toward accomplishing the work of God's kingdom entrusted particularly to us, here and now.**

**It is our hope that such unity rooted in our identity in Christ and such a clear call to mission shaped and sustained by the Spirit will glorify God, renew the PC(USA), and attract others to be a part of what God is doing in and among us.** To such ends, we humbly make the recommendations that follow this prayer by George MacLeod, founder of the Iona Community, cited in *Christ of the Celts: The Healing of Creation* by J. Philip Newell (Paulist Press, 1997, p. 92):

*Give us grace in our changing day  
To stand by the temple that is the present church,  
The noisome temple  
The sometimes scandalized temple that is the present church,  
Listening sometime to what again seems mumbo jumbo  
Make it our custom to go  
Till the new outline of your Body for our day  
Becomes visible in our midst.*

- A. **There is good and sufficient reason to keep the six agencies as separate but interrelated entities.** Based on data gathered through conversations with agency leaders, a survey, conversations with middle governing body leaders, and its own deliberations, **the Review Committee perceives neither a compelling case nor an obvious will or desire for serious structural reorganization of General Assembly agencies.** The Review Committee's conclusion is **not intended to preempt or prohibit such considerations if and when they are deemed needed and appropriate, but the review does not lead us to such a recommendation at this time.** That being noted, the Review Committee sees ways in which interagency collaboration can be improved, cases where there is a **perception of redundancy** that calls for better communication of the respective agencies' peculiar and distinctive roles, and situations that may call for further delineation of responsibilities.
- B. There have been and continue to be good faith efforts for constant, cordial, cooperative, and collaborative ministry for the glory of God, the strengthening of the church's ministry and mission, and the good of God's creation. The Review Committee affirms these, and encourages both their continuation and continued development so that all agencies and governing bodies covenant together to cultivate and promote the spiritual welfare of the whole church.
- C. The Review Committee recommends that collaboration with other agencies and MGBs be included specifically as a standard or criterion for the periodic reviews of each General Assembly agency and of each agency head.
- D. The Review Committee recommends a review of and possible revisions to the *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* with attention specifically given to the roles and responsibilities of the General Assembly Mission Council and its Executive Director and the Office of the General Assembly and the Stated Clerk. Until such review and clarification takes place, **the Review Committee recommends that the Stated Clerk, as the one agency head who is elected by the General Assembly, be affirmed by the General Assembly and its agencies as the one who speaks with one voice for the General Assembly** and, as stipulated in the *Organization for Mission*, "shall promote the harmony and efficiency of the General Assembly and its agencies in cooperation with the General Assembly Mission Council and its Executive Director, with special attention to relationships between General Assembly entities, and with synods, presbyteries, and sessions" (*Manual of the General Assembly*, 2010, *Organization for Mission*, IV.B.2.n., p. 10).[See Item 18-08 to the 219th General Assembly (2010).]
- E. The Review Committee perceives significant levels of confusion between consultation and collaboration. While good communication and sharing of ideas are valued, they are not in and of themselves enough. Beyond such consultation, commitment to shared priorities and united efforts to accomplish shared mission objectives are at the heart of collaboration. The Review Committee recommends that the Office of the General Assembly include in the agenda of each General Assembly a joint report from the six General Assembly agencies that documents their collaborative accomplishments.

F. Prime areas for new, continued, or increased cooperation and collaboration include:

1. Presbyterian Foundation/General Assembly Mission Council collaboration as documented in the report and in the Clay/Valentine letter included in Appendix III. The Review Committee affirms the progress noted in this letter and emphasizes the importance of continuing such efforts and progress through current and future leadership transitions.
2. To support and facilitate such collaboration between the Presbyterian Foundation and the General Assembly Mission Council, and to help resolve differences when needed, the Review Committee responds to Referral 08-21 with the recommendation that the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee continue to function for at least another two years. [See Item 18-09 to the 219th General Assembly (2010).] The Review Committee sees encouraging signs of progress in negotiating the complex relationship between the GAMC and the Foundation, but nonetheless suggests that, should clarification of roles become necessary, the Restricted Funds Resolution Committee consider obtaining a legal review from a qualified attorney related neither to the General Assembly Mission Council/Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or the Foundation regarding the relative responsibilities of the General Assembly Mission Council and the Foundation.
3. Commitments and efforts of the Foundation and the General Assembly Mission Council, through the appointed workgroup, for improved cooperation and collaboration between the two agencies. The Review Committee recognizes that this workgroup has particular and peculiar issues to address, and affirms the focus and intentions of the agencies and the workgroup. The Foundation/GAMC workgroup could be a model upon which all agencies create a workgroup that focuses on collaboration, or that commitment might be formally recognized as an objective of the current gatherings of chief executives and elected chairs from the six agencies. In one way or another, the Review Committee recommends the formal recognition that collaboration among agencies is a priority, for which all agencies hold themselves accountable.
4. The Review Committee received indications of dissatisfaction with the Foundation's investment returns and fee structure, as well as concerns about the Foundation's perceived emphasis on mutual funds. Apart from these management issues, there appears to be a more fundamental concern about how the Foundation views its funds development mission, or the limitations of that mission. The Foundation seems to view its role primarily as an investment advisor; whereas certain other agencies require or expect a more traditional fund-raising approach. The lack of a centralized approach to funds development among the agencies may be confusing and discouraging to potential donors. The Review Committee recommends that these issues be explored with the objective of achieving a more coordinated, collaborative, and cohesive approach to funds development.
5. As noted in Appendix III, there will be a convening of field staff of all agencies in January 2010, in Louisville. As the Review Committee prepares this report, it is with hope that the January convention will have a broad and inclusive agenda, focused on the recognition that all of the General Assembly agencies are in it together—the positive and conscious realization that what each agency does is for the benefit of the whole church. The Review Committee notes with concern the manner in which the General Assembly Mission Council recently deployed regionally-based development associates to expand funding for General Assembly mission. While applauding the motivation of funding mission, the Review Committee recommends that the GAMC affirm a clear commitment

to, and together with other agencies take affirmative steps toward, collaboration that goes beyond communication between agencies and includes collaborative planning and funds development. This manner of collaboration is identified as important by all six agencies in their joint report (Appendix II), by middle governing body representatives, and by the General Assembly in its charge to the Review Committee.

6. The Review Committee recommends a meeting or meetings of agency heads and chairs to further focus on collaboration. This meeting should include an educational component on what collaboration really means and involves, as well as a critical assessment regarding obstacles to and opportunities for collaboration. The meeting or meetings should specifically address collaboration regarding funds development, communications, and church relations, all of which are identified as priority opportunities for collaboration in the report jointly submitted to the Review Committee (Appendix II). Agencies should consider use of a consultant to lead the meeting(s).
  7. **The need for more effective branding of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its agencies—who they are; what they do; how they collaborate; and a sense of common identity and shared mission commitments among the agencies.**
- G. **The Review Committee recommends that a review of the whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its six agencies, focusing broadly on the effectiveness of the six agencies and other governing bodies in working collaboratively to implement the General Assembly’s mission directives, be integrated into the cycle of individual agency reviews. The Review Committee suggests that such a review committee be appointed by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) to report to the 223rd General Assembly (2018).** [See Item 18-10 to the 219th General Assembly (2010).]
- H. The Review Committee perceives a call and cry for a new way of understanding and being General Assembly, which includes:
1. Increased time given to worship, study, and discernment of who we as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are, who we are called to be, and what we are called to do, all done with the prayer that God’s Spirit will unify, renew, energize, and mobilize the church for ministry, mission, and witness. This commitment of time to worship, study, and discernment will better prepare the General Assembly to wrestle with difficult and sometimes controversial, but nonetheless important matters that deserve and demand consideration.
  2. More effective management of the amount of time and energy that the General Assembly commits to issues of legislation and policy development, so that increased time and energy may be given to the above focus. Such management may require a greater willingness of the General Assembly to allow prescribed work to be done and actions taken at committee level.
  3. **Increased attention given by General Assembly to mission prioritization, resulting in a manageable number of identifiable mission directives/priorities that are determined for the whole church, to which General Assembly agencies, middle governing bodies, congregations, and individuals can commit and cooperate. The Review Committee recommends that the General Assembly Mission Council and the Office of the General Assembly collaboratively guide and ensure such a process, drawing upon other agencies and resources as appropriate and as directed by *Organization for Mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* and commended in VI.D.**

4. **Clarification of who communicates, manages, and oversees the collaborative implementation of those mission directives on behalf of the General Assembly, a role and responsibility that the Review Committee sees residing with the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly in cooperation with the Executive Director of the General Assembly Mission Council** (note the citation from *Organization for Mission* in prior item XIII.D. above).
5. **Consideration of the feasibility and/or desirability of having one voice designated to speak for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and/or some entity designated to hold the church as a whole, particularly the General Assembly agencies, accountable for decisions and commitments made by the General Assembly.**
6. The Review Committee recommends referral of these issues to the committee to be appointed by the 219th General Assembly (2010) to review biennial assemblies, recommending that the General Assembly include such review of the way we conduct General Assembly in the scope of this committee's work. [See Item 18-11 to the 219th General Assembly (2010).]