

ITEM H.206
FOR INFORMATION

Increased Coordination with OGA Progress Report
Presbyterian Mission Agency Board
March 22, 2017

The “PMA Coordination with OGA” Ministerial Team had its first meeting on Wednesday, September 14, 2016. Following initial introductions, we took time to engage in faith sharing from two of the members, Ruling Elders Conrad M. Rocha and Melinda Sanders. Mr. Rocha then posed the basic question which this team was charged to address: “What are the two areas in which increased Presbyterian Mission Agency coordination with the Office of the General Assembly would better serve the church?”

As a way to become familiar with the interactions that currently exist between PMA and OGA, we invited the Rev. Tom Hay of the Office of the General Assembly to join us. He and Barry Creech shared with the team members various activities/initiatives that currently exist between PMA and OGA. What was most interesting to the team members, however, was the fact that the informal relationship that exists between Messrs. Creech and Hay seem to be one of the most helpful interactions that exist between these two arms of the General Assembly. They also noted that in the past there has been an active and ongoing dialogue between the Executive Director of PMA and the Stated Clerk of the PCUSA. This interaction continues with the present persons holding those offices. However, these are not structural relationships, they exist only because of the persons holding the offices and historically that has not always been the case.

At the conclusion of the meeting and after hearing from Messrs. Creech and Hay, it was agreed that the best method of responding to this question would be to engage the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) in this conversation not only to gather and discuss areas of cooperation but also to model cooperation and collaboration in the process of such conversations. After further discussion it was agreed that we would:

1. *Invite COGA to join the conversation as a full partner; and,*
2. *Concurrently identify ways of inviting input from PMA staff regarding areas of current cooperation and collaboration and possible areas/points of collaboration which might be helpful in furthering the work and mission of the PMA in serving the church and its other councils.*
3. *Document currently existing areas of cooperation between PMA and OGA which would become part of our final report and which would be shared with both the PMAB and COGA.*

Wilson Kennedy, Vice chair of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and a member of this ministerial team, would reach out to COGA and ask whether COGA would be interested in actively participating in these discussions.

Thanks to the efforts of Wilson, COGA created a working group within its own structure, to engage the PMA Ministerial Team in addressing our charge.

On January 17, 2017, the two groups met for the first time, by conference call, and after introductions, agreed that we would work together as one Team, with all members having equal voice and further agreeing that we would use a consensus model of decision making to arrive at suggested responses to the charge. Part of that discussion was the recognition that the Church seems to believe that PMA and COGA do not collaborate and that part of our suggestions for future inter-relations might be to address and highlight the

collaboration that does exist between these two arms of the General Assembly. Part of this confusion is fueled by a lack of understanding of how shared services take place and the issue of Per Capita and its allocation between PMA and OGA. This is further complication by the role of the PC(USA), A Corporation and its relationship to both PMA and OGA.

On January 31, 2017 the joint Team met again by conference call. After much discussion following further subsequent conversation between Conrad and Wilson, it was agreed that for our March meeting, to be held on March 22, 2017 in Puerto Rico, the following agenda would be followed in order to engage in more meaningful and productive conversations. We also recognized that unless and until we have a definition of “shared services”, determinations about how and whether to look at this issue will be difficult, at best. Further, how shared services relates to Per Capita apportionment between COGA and PMA, even the issues of Communication could not be adequately addressed in response to the Team’s charge. Therefore:

1. We would be divided into two groups, with persons self-selecting which issue they would like to engage and, recognizing that self-selection might result in an uneven distribution of the workload, that the Team Chair and Vice Chair would make assignments based on stated preferences of the Team members:
 - a. Shared Services/Per Capita:
 - i. Shared Services. Looks at shared services and definition and agreements now in existence.
 - A. Settle on a definition for “shared services”; then
 - B. Determine whether anything can or should be changed or tweaked? How do we talk to one another about this?
 - ii. Per Capita. What is that about and how do we handle that? Where is it? How does the future look? And, what can we do, jointly, to be faithful to its use and application?
 - b. Communication. Encourage formalization of the conversations? Are there things that we currently do in cross-communication that might be or could be more formalized

We recognize that the Way Forward Commission may be having similar conversations and it would be our hope that our conversations would be informative to that process, not in lieu of that process.

Finally, we would note that we do not expect to be able to formally respond to our charge until the joint meeting of the PMA Board and the COGA in September, 2017.