



September 14, 2021

Dear Members of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board,

Please find attached the report of CounterStories Consulting regarding the reflecting and re-envisioning phase of the Presbyterian Mission Agency visioning process. We are grateful to David Hooker, Allen Hilton and Kirby Broadnax for their thoughtful work throughout the process. They have surfaced significant issues and recommendations for the Presbyterian Mission Agency that will be important to consider as we shape our preferred future. You will find an Executive Summary of the report on pages 4-9. I encourage you to read the report prayerfully, remembering it is CounterStories Consulting's advice for us. I anticipate our response to this report will evolve and change as we consider what to implement, and how to operationalize some, if not all, of the recommendations presented.

At this point, the findings of CounterStories Consulting are in your hands to reflect upon and to discern the next steps we take in the process. There is much work to be done. I am excited about the possibilities in many of the recommendations. May the Holy Spirit be our guide as we work together to better serve a changing Church and world for generations to come.

In faith and hope,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane Moffett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Diane Moffett  
President/Executive Director



# Reflecting, Reimagining, and Making Space for Rebuilding

*A report on the current progress of the Presbyterian Mission Agency's Matthew 25 Vision Implementation Process*

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**September 2021**





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# Executive Summary

This report, submitted by *CounterStories Consulting, llc (CSC)*, presents the conclusions and recommendations to this point of the Presbytery Mission Agency's (PMA) Vision Implementation Process (VIP). The process was implemented in order to design a transformation of the PMA that will help it to embrace and then go beyond the "Matthew 25" Overture. The conclusions and recommendations contained herein are offered as a scaffolding for a vision that will guide the organization over the course of a generation (25 years).

**The Process:** The process involves three primary actions toward implementation: **Reflect, Reimagine, Rebuild**. The actions are iterative such that while this report presents the conclusions and recommendations near the end of the **first round** of reflection and reimagine stages, both reflecting and reimagining should continue as the VIP moves into and through the rebuilding process. The report describes the results of this initial iteration of the Reflecting phase and the Reimagining phase.

**The Reflecting** phase of the work has involved a series of monthly retreats with the PMA Leadership Cabinet, members of the Mission Agency's Board (PMAB), and other representatives from the Wider Church from time to time. Each month gathered perspectives from mostly outside experts regarding aspects of PMA's work. These retreats included hearing from: other PC(USA) agency heads, Educators, PC(USA) Caucus of Color leaders, those doing mission work or providing ecumenical leadership outside the US, and others. Each session also included theologians and biblical scholars who provided their insights on Matthew 25 and what would be important to emphasize in the reimagining of the PMA.

Reflecting also involved listening sessions and focus groups. These included PMA employees, its Global Partners, the PC(USA) Vision 2020 Committee, a select number of former and current Young Adult Volunteers, and others. Participants responded to a series of questions regarding the current and future narrative of the PMA: What is going well within the PMA or between PMA and its operational partners? What is not going well that should be either reimagined or left behind? What are your reflections on Matthew 25? What should come next for the future of the agency?

**The Reimagining phase** – The Reimagining phase was primarily conducted through the work of the **Leadership Innovation Team (LIT)**. There were 38 LIT members, who were divided approximately evenly between PMA Staff and PC(USA) leadership – pastors, mid-council and presbytery leaders, PMAB members, theologians, and leaders of important church entities (Seminary, College, and University Educators). The LIT was also accompanied and supported by employees of the Executive Director's Office and a few other PMA and ASG employees.

The LIT was introduced to several analytical and action models to create shared framing. These included:

- Otto Scharmer's [Four Levels of Listening](#)
- Uri Bronfenbrenner's [Ecological Systems Theory](#) (and Jill Fish's Cultural Adaptation) Sohail Inayatullah's [Causal Layered Analysis](#)
- Francis Aguilar's [STEEP \(Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental, and Political\) futures analysis](#)

These frameworks provided both a shared analysis and a shared language through which to determine what should be kept, what should be left behind, what should be reimagined, and what should be added in terms of PMA values and actions.

The LIT was led through a series of seventeen (17) approximately three-hour sessions that resulted in a proposed vision and mission statement, a list of seven (7) essential values (and many other important values) and a set of recommendations for the future of the PMA. These follow in summary fashion:

In order to align itself with a Matthew 25 vision and to organize its work in transformative ways, the Leadership Innovation Team submits:

### **Proposed Identity Statement**

*The Presbyterian Mission Agency is a band of disciples, guided by the Holy Spirit to continue a movement launched by Jesus Christ to welcome the realm of God on earth.*

### **Proposed Vision Statement:**

*PMA is working towards a just, radically inclusive, and relational world that is free of violence and domination, that celebrates and values all of creation, where there are no more margins, and where God's love and grace are felt by all.*

### **Proposed Mission Statement:**

*As a convener of sacred spaces, the PMA nurtures disciples of Jesus and inspires, equips, and connects congregations, mid-councils, other entities of the PC(USA) and our partners locally and globally to do justice and to repair historical harms. The PMA listens to, learns from, and co-labors with communities forced to the margins, and connects them to the relationships and resources needed to eradicate systemic poverty, dismantle structural racism, end militarism, and address our climate crisis.*

*To do this, the PMA provides:*

- *context specific accompaniment*
- *assistance with the identification and development of innovative approaches, and*
- *funds to support local and regional initiatives.*

### **Proposed list of Values:**

The following is a proposed list of 10 essential values. The recommended number for an

organization to operate with is no more than 5-7. The values here are presented in alphabetical order and otherwise not prioritized. An early action between PMAB and the PMA employees would be to narrow this list to 5-7 and develop an agreed upon set of markers for how these values will manifest in the Agency and between the Agency and others. The process of narrowing and articulating the way they will be demonstrated is an important step in infusing the transformation process into Agency life and culture.

***Authenticity***

***Creativity & Imagination***

***Decoloniality/Anti-racism***

***Diversity***

***Humility***

***Justice***

***Love***

***Mutuality***

***Spirit-Alignment / Being Spirit-Led***

***Ubuntu***

## **Recommendations in Support of PMA Transformation:**

The following recommendations are organized within the *CounterStories* framing, which proposes that culture is best understood and best transformed by attending to relationships, resources, structures, and testimonial authority.

### **Relationships**

***Decentralized structure*** – While there will remain an important aspect of the Agency operations in Louisville, many (probably most) of the Agency employees will be more locally situated in the contexts where they are directly engaged;

***Employee expertise*** – The primary role of the Agency will be as convenor. To more readily fulfill all of the various convening functions, the skill set and knowledge base of many employees will shift towards relational practices such as asset and network identification and mapping, convening and facilitating difficult conversations, network weaving, community organizing, etc. This does not eliminate or even lessen the need for skill building vital congregations, dismantling structural racism, eradicating systemic poverty, addressing climate change,, or decreasing militarism. Rather, working in the local context will require an enhanced skill set that can be implemented in multidisciplinary teams. The transformation from current skills and expertise to these new emphases will require investments in skill and knowledge development for current employees as well as an emphasis away from siloed and independent action towards multifocal, interdisciplinary, systems-oriented engagement.

***A new way of determining the work of employees*** – The PMA team members would be organized semi-holocratically with an emphasis on convening, listening to community concerns, leading by belonging, and building at the pace of community. Organic, responsive, elicited, community-defined agendas will determine the scope of work. The communities

with which the team engages should always be given the opportunity and responsibility to “define, lead, own, benefit from, and sustain”<sup>9</sup> the local and regional transformations.

*‘Supervision’ as a relational practice (“mentorary”)* that constantly improves relational skills and innovates networking strategies among the team working in the various decentralized placements will be a primary concern of the Agency

*Resource Allocation* – The current model of resources allocation is mostly program focused (disaster, hunger, theology and formation, race, equity, etc.). The emerging organization will require a fluid allocation of resources that is based on the scope of work developed at the context-specific level to be amenable to the nature of the work and not for a specific program.

*Scope of work* is not predetermined by program-focused resources. Rather, the scope and focus for how to address the Matthew 25 foci within each context will be determined by listening and co-laboring at the context level. Funding and other resource allocations are iterative and driven by context-identified needs.

## Resources

*Designated Funds* -- There is an ongoing conversation considering the extent to which previously established designated funds can have restrictions loosened or reinterpreted to give more operational flexibility. Those conversations should continue. The Agency and Board should seek to establish mechanisms going forward that have broader designations or few if any restrictions to allow context-specific funding.

*Context-specific and systemic resource allocation vs programmatic allocation* -- This continues the previous recommendation: Funding for Locally Situated Action Teams should be developed based on the mix of needs identified by the local context and, to the extent possible, not siloed by specific internally established program categories.

*Mission co-worker compensation* – Mission co-worker compensation should be evaluated to address the extent to which compensation packages create a sense of elite presence in local settings, the extent to which compensation (outside and inside the United States is scaled to the local context); also vestiges of patriarchy may exist in which it is expected that only one co-worker is paid in certain placements; if both co-workers are qualified and engaged in a local context, compensation should account for this circumstance.

*Repairing Historical Harms* – In this newly emphasized central feature of the Agency’s vision and mission, there should be a specific resource established to convene a process to determine appropriate actions needed to achieve repair with specific communities: US Indigenous, African American, Latino/a, and Asian American Pacific Islander.

*Personnel Development* – To support organizational transformation among the current employees, a substantial resources pool should be established to provide the knowledge base and skill sets that will be required in the next iteration of the Agency’s life. This reinforces the spoken commitment to including the current employees in PMA’s future while also stressing the

importance of relational skills and mindset going forward.

*Reimagine the grant-making process, the role of Mission Networks, and use of designated funds that cannot be otherwise undesignated.* There were many concerns expressed by global partners and others about the transactional and inequitable nature of the grant making process. While there is a desire to move funding away from program specific allocations, there is also a need to investigate each of the ways that financial exchange processes create or reinforce a power imbalance and possibility for communities' self-determination.

## Structures

The transformation of relationships and alignment of the vision and mission with Matthew 25 commitments will be best achieved by a significant organizational realignment. At a high level the realignment would involve:

*Louisville* – A continuing presence in Louisville (if the Agency is seeking to decenter Louisville, then the Louisville location might not necessarily be described as 'headquarters'). The functions present in Louisville would include:

- Agency Leadership
- Agency-wide Administrative and programmatic Support (Communications, HR, etc)
- Fund and Resource Development
- **(new) Office of Innovation, Futuring, and Discernment**
- **(new) Office for Repair of Historical Harms**
- Small contingent of subject matter experts (Structural Racism, Systemic Poverty, Congregational Vitality and theological formation, Climate, and militarism)

*Locally Situated Action Teams (LSATs)* – These are newly emerging structural approaches to decentralizing the work of the Agency. Teams of employees will be co-located in contexts based on a set of criteria to be established in the next phase of the work. The team members will be conveners, listeners, and co-laborers with those in the local context. The local context could be a network of congregations and/or mid-councils, partnerships with the local church and civil society partners acting regionally in furtherance of one or more of the Matthew 25 foci. The criteria for placement have to be established and are likely to have similarities and differences for the teams in the US and indigenous territories, or outside the continental US. The consistencies and differences should be established in conversation with those who are currently involved with the work in similar localities to where Teams are likely to be placed

## Testimonial Authority

Testimonial Authority refers to who is listened to and how their voices are honored (even privileged). In an effort to 'center the margins', it is recommended that PMA establish a set of advisory councils (the labels "advisory" or "council" or "commission" should be chosen with regard for the larger church structures which give certain authority and responsibilities to units with certain names) to create ongoing mechanisms for listening for present and emerging

concerns within communities whose full voice has not previously honored. The following are three examples of possible advisory councils that could help inform the Agency's deliberations and work:

- Non-US advisory council (possibly with regional sub-councils)
- US council – with primary early focus being on reparations (indigenous, African American, Asian American/Pacific Islanders, and Puerto Rico) and on truth, justice, and reconciliation and possible ways to engage that work; and
- Ecumenical/ civil society partners' council.

## **Conclusion:**

In the same manner that development and transformation of communities seeking to dismantle structural racism and eradicate systemic poverty has to take place at the 'pace of the community,' the internal organizational transformation should take place at the pace of the team. The people aren't the problem, the problem is the problem. When seeking to orient all internal relationships toward a new narrative, there will be many instances where people seem to 'not get it.' They are just reverting to old habits, habits formed in relationship to the old narrative. Similarly, the urge to move the people out and find people who do get it, might also be reverting to an older narrative. Patience, a commitment to relational leadership, forgiveness and grace, with a constant insistence on the announced transformation is what will be called for in this moment.

As a constant reminder of the intention of this transformation process: In the Gospel of Matthew, in the 25 chapter as throughout the book, Jesus encourages all who would listen to meet people at their point of their greatest need, to extend to them grace, and co-labor with them to build an just, equitable, and hospitable world. This is an understanding of the work that is now required as the PMA undertakes the rebuilding phase.

Be blessed in every way as you proceed. Respectfully submitted,

*CSC, LLC*

*David Anderson Hooker*

*Allen R. Hilton*

*Kirby E. Broadnax*

# Section I - Answering an Overture -- An Introduction

## Preface

In 2016, at the 222nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), an Overture was passed which stated the Church's intention to become a church guided by the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as articulated in Matthew 25.

### Overture of the 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly Establishing Matthew 25 Focus:

*2016 General Assembly*

*Item 11-03: On Choosing to Be a Church Committed to the Gospel of Matthew 25—From the Presbytery of the Cascades. Assembly Action:*

*On this Item, the General Assembly Approved the item as Amended with Comments Approved item:*

- *Recommit ourselves at the congregational level, the mid council level, and the national levels of our church to locate ourselves with the poor, to advocate with all of our voice for the poor, and to seek opportunities to take risks for and with the poor (in the soup kitchens and catholic worker houses, among the immigrants, with those working to end mass incarceration, and with those who seek to protect all of us, especially the poorest of the poor around the world, from the vagaries of climate change).*
- *Call on our churches to commit to a year of Bible study focused on issues of social justice, with particular attention to the matters of race proposed in Item 11-08 and the application of the Confession of Belhar to these concerns.*
- *Call on our presbyteries and synods to examine their own practice, placing these commitments at the center of their concerns, and to streamline the way that issues of immediate significance can be forwarded to the General Assembly by adopting procedures so that overtures and proposals on peacemaking and social justice concerns from sessions and committees may be considered quickly.*
- *Facilitate the processes by which these concerns can be brought before us as a national body by resisting new barriers to overture submissions such as additional concurrences, tighter deadlines, or new overture topic restrictions at any General Assembly.*
- *Commit to focusing a significant block of the time allotted for future General Assemblies on creating opportunities in consultation with the Committees on Local Arrangements to engage all of the commissioners, delegates, and observers in acts of service to and with communities at risk.*
- *Assure that there are voices of those who are most at risk from within our church and outside of it (including interfaith voices), who are invited to share with and challenge the assembly, both in the plenary and committee sessions.*
- *Recommend that the Presbyterian Mission Agency, through its Compassion, Peace, and Justice ministries area, implement a coordinated strategy or "cycle of social engagement" that will assure that concerns around confronting racism, environmental concerns, standing against violence and militarism, and advocating for the dispossessed come before the assembly on a regular and consistent basis, soliciting overtures from presbyteries before each General Assembly on topics of the most immediate concern.*

# The Vision Implementation Process

Following this direction from the General Assembly, the Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) initiated a process for the total reimagining of the PMA in light of the Matthew 25-inspired overture. It was determined that the Matthew 25 effort for the PMA would center around three foci:

- Building Congregational Vitality;
- Eradicating Systemic Poverty; and
- Dismantling Structural Racism.

It was further understood at the outset that other concerns referenced in the overture including addressing the climate crisis, seeking to reduce violence and demilitarize society, addressing gender justice issues, etc. would also be concerns of the Agency and, to the extent possible, these concerns would be considered as they intersect with the three primary foci. It was also clearly stated that organizational transformation should be accomplished in ways that result in anti-racist and decolonial structures, policies, and practices.

The Executive Director initiated an extensive Vision Implementation Process (VIP) with the clear understanding that the structure of the agency, the allocation of resources, and the internal culture of the organization would all necessarily undergo substantial transformation and that the vision being articulated and implemented was not going to be a typical 3–5-year strategic plan. Rather, the vision to be articulated and subsequent Mission Agency<sup>1</sup> transformation would be ‘generational’ (i. e. a 25-year approach to transformation).

The Body of this report describes with some level of detail and nuance the process that has been implemented to this point and the recommendations that have emerged from the process in terms of reshaping relationships, reallocating resources, transforming structure, and refocusing on who should be extended additional testimonial authority during and as a result of the transformation. The sections that follow are presented in this order:

- **Section I** introduces the overture and the implementation process that comprises the Agency’s response to it.
- **Section II** describes the three-phase Vision Implementation Process, along with a brief history that explains the origin and evolution of this way of proceeding.
- **Section III** recounts the input that has been received through extensive and varied listening sessions before chronicling the work process of the Leadership Innovation Team that was informed by that input.
- **Section IV** synthesizes the LIT’s envisioning work by identifying the powerful identity, vision, mission, and values that have emerged from that team’s creative engagement.
- **Section V** offers recommendations as to how the vision ought to take specific shape in the Agency’s relationships, resources, structures, and testimonial authority, along with a few principles to guide the transition.

- **Section VI** supplies a short list of first steps that will provide early “wins” in the process and set the course for a successful implementation and rebuilding.

It is clear that the substantial nature of the proposed transformation could not happen in one moment based on one set of easily implementable decisions. However, it is also clear that transformations stall out if bold actions are not taken early in the transformation process, if the mission and vision and values language is not employed to advance a preferred narrative of a future, and if leadership is not fully aligned with the outcome and new direction, transformation is likely to stall out.

# Section II - “The Process Is the Goal” -- History and Structure of the Process

## *The Evolution of the VIP Process*

This section describes the history of the processes that ultimately merged to become the first two aspects of the Vision implementation Process. After describing the history there are summaries and synthesis of specific components of the process. Specifically, we describe the listening sessions and monthly PMA Leadership Cabinet Core team retreats that were implemented during the height of the reflective phase and then the work of the Leadership Innovation Team, which was the primary modality through which the reimagining aspects of the VIP have been implemented. In subsequent sections of the report there are discussions of the values that should undergird the Mission Agency’s work at every level.

The Vision Implementation Process (VIP) for the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) began as a proposed series of monthly day-long virtual retreats and listening sessions hosted by the Executive Director’s Office (EDO). This process would allow PMA Board (PMAB) Members, the EDO staff, and select members of the PMA Leadership Cabinet (referred to collectively as the Core team) to hear the perspective and voices of many important constituencies including Leaders of other units of PCUSA, representatives of the various Communities of Color Caucuses, Educators, and Leaders of other institutions that might have insights for transitioning toward becoming a Matthew 25 organization. The content of specific sessions is further detailed later in this section. To ensure a theological grounding and center for all the analysis and imagining, each monthly retreat would also include a Bible study and question and answer session.

As CSC made a preliminary assessment of the relationships and culture of ministry within the Agency in advance of offering suggestions for a VIP Process design, certain patterns emerged that produced the following observations:

**Combination of Values and Structural Issues:** There are substantial values/philosophical differences among the team members and between team members and partners outside PMA concerning the proper approach to ministry in general and specifically the role and relationships that PMA teams should occupy in the domestic and global fields in which they minister. Disagreements with some current practices are often communicated by use of emotional and values-laden language such as “colonialism,” “racism,” “paternalism,” “abandonment,” “cultural competency,” and so on.

**Recommendation:** There is a need for an **organization-wide, consensus-seeking process**, possibly involving employees, mission partners, and some other important allied voices to articulate a **narrative of a preferred future**. That narrative of a preferred future would serve as the foundation from which to design the structure of the PMA. This, in turn, will lend a sense of clarity to all employees.

The **Goals** of said process would be to:

1. **Establish a shared vision.** This is not to be done starting from a current baseline and projecting out into the future. Rather, this is based on a projection of futures, and then building backwards from the emerging future to establish a sense of immediacy.
2. The vision will be implemented by articulating an **actionable and operational set of values** and **intelligible action-oriented directions** for the future of the PMA.
3. **Reimagine the organizational structure** of PMA in line with vision, values, and direction.

Such a process would be accomplished in **four stages**:

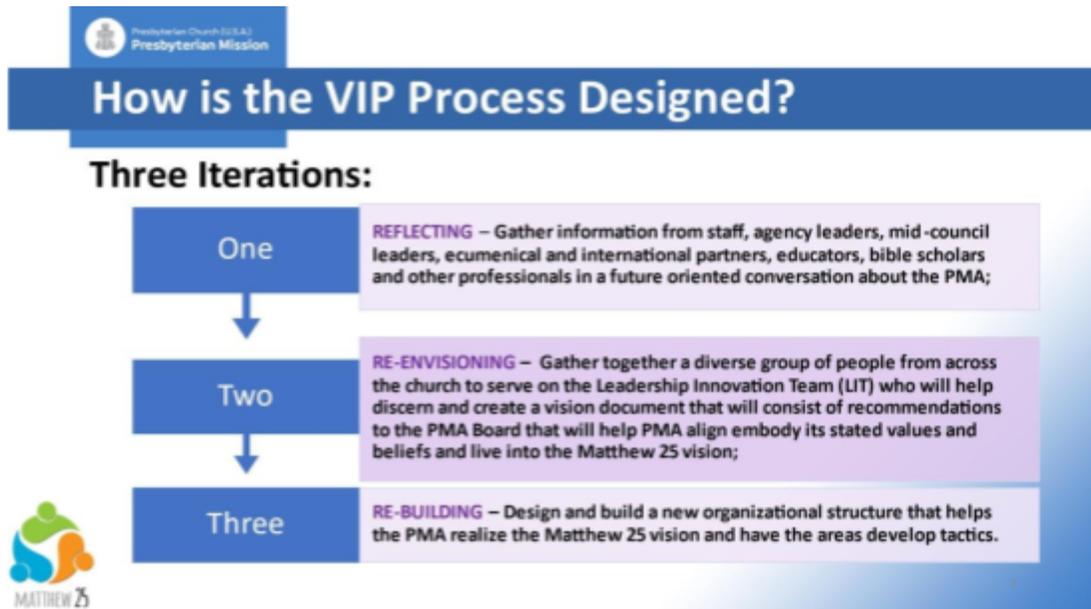
- I. Gain a clear sense of the **current state of the organization** in terms of assets, networks, information, partnerships, strengths, missed opportunities, well-aligned and misaligned energies and resources
- II. **Cast a compelling vision** of a generational future for Mission/Global Engagement (20-25 years out);
- III. **Imagine the best structure and forms of operation** through which to pursue the vision; and
- IV. **Position resources and establish goals and accountability measures** inside of new structural configuration.

These were observations and recommendations that contributed to the design that the VIP ultimately assumed. The process was then implemented with the following timeline:

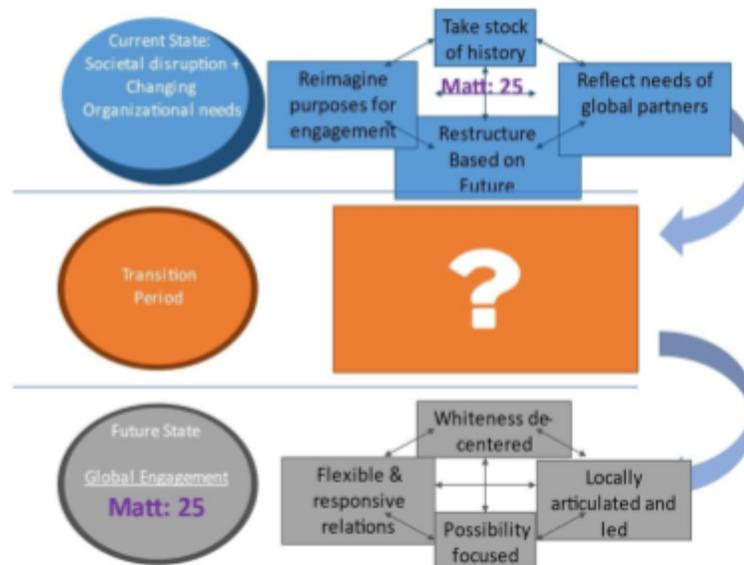
Activity/Phase of Work	Timeframe	Notes
World Mission Conflict Assessment	Jan 2020 - April 2020	Recommendations for next phase of process presented to Interim Director 23 April 2020 (some delay during and immediately after the process in response to COVID adjustments)
PMA Vision Implementation Process (Core Team)	Nov 2020- May 2021	CSC process was introduced and began being integrated into the original VIP design in January with complete adoption of CSC design process in Feb 2021
Broad Listening sessions (Employees, Global Partners, PCUSA partners and invested parties)	March 2021 – June 2021	
Leadership Innovation Team	May 2021 – July 2021	17 sessions – bi-weekly plus special sessions and Three Core + LIT sessions
Synthesis, Report Writing, Production of Recommendations	August 2021 -Sept 2021	

**Figure 1 -- Timetable for CSC Work with the PMA VIP Process to Date**

The three phases of the VIP process were often visualized in one of the two ways that are illustrated below.



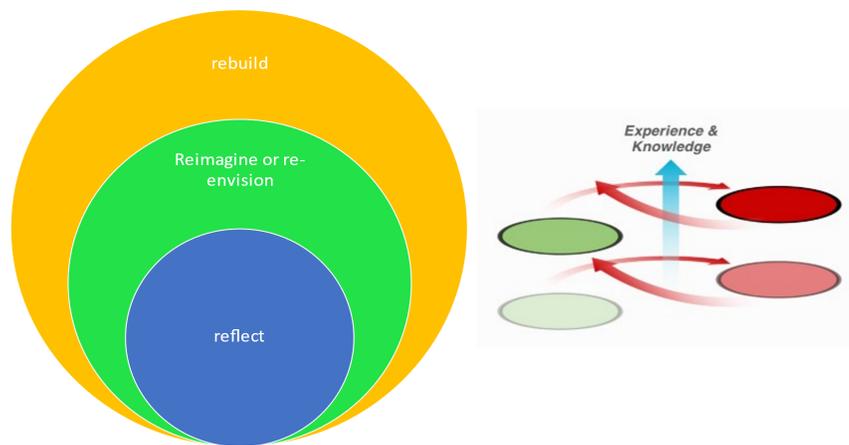
**Proposed Model for Narrative Change**



**Fig 2 a and b - Alternative visual images for three-phase design for Narrative Change/ Global Engagement**

The language of ‘phases’ used in many of the original presentations and discussions of the process, created the misunderstanding that phase 1 (reflection and listening) would be concluded before phase 2 would commence. However, a better understanding was that reflecting and listening would continue throughout phase 2 and 3 and that both reflection and reimagining will, in fact, continue throughout the coming transformation phase, which is likely to last 2-5 years.

A different diagram with a slightly more dynamic emphasis that also visualizes reflection embedded within reimagination and both embedded in rebuilding was developed to emphasize the iterative nature of knowledge gathering, imagining, and experimentation:



**Figure 3 - Three-Phase Dynamic Design for Narrative Change**

***What we heard during reflection:***

The next section summarizes the content of the listening sessions and monthly Core team retreats, which are aspects of the reflection and listening work and then the contents and summary of the conversations held by the **Leadership Innovation Team**, which was convened as the primary vehicle for the second part of the process, **reimagining**. Each section concludes with a set of important insights and key takeaways from these portions of the engagement.

# Section III - The Present and Future Narrative of PMA -- A Summary of Listening and LIT

## *Listening Sessions*

The three-phase design of PMA's visioning process began with an extended time of "Reflection" in order to identify the status quo narrative of PMA through a slate of listening sessions and other ways of hearing from PMA employees, the wider PC(USA), global and ecumenical partners, and other wise and expert voices from outside the church. CSC consultants (and in a few cases PMA employees) facilitated these conversations that tapped the on-the-ground knowledge and perspectives of different constituencies within and connected to the PMA. What was heard from these various groups is summarized, and synthesized below.

In every listening session, participants were asked four main questions posed in a variety of ways:

- What is going well?
- Which, if any, values and practices need to be dispensed with?
- How does Matthew 25 figure in all of this?
- What should come next?

In addition to these core questions, facilitators occasionally added questions specific to the setting in which participants do their work. For example, with Partners and PMA staff operating outside the US, facilitators asked participants to 'identify regional or global trends and cultural developments that an agile mission agency should know as it crafts its ministry approach.' The spaces for conversation were built in ways that encouraged candid sharing from a wide swath of participants. This input has helped form a picture, not only for the CSC team, but also as foregrounding information given to the LIT.

Throughout the "Reflection" phase, facilitators sensed and often explicitly heard a pervasive and troubling cynicism, specifically among PMA employees, based on their and their predecessors' experience of feeling unheard. Because of past disappointments, employees often think their input will be unwelcome and go nowhere. As a result, two-hour listening sessions built to center and welcome their voices became an experience for which many of them expressed great gratitude, both within the setting and in e-mails afterward.

The next chart captures the consistency with which various groups named a core of specific concerns.

	Global Partners	International Employees	Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC)	US - Based Employees	Young Voices (recent YAV Alum)
Top-Down Hier.		X	X	X	
Siloed Structure	X	X	X	X	
Colonialism/ White-Supr.	X	X	X	X	X
Grants Process Power Diff.	X	X	X	X	
Discourages Innovation		X		X	X
Feel Lack of Support		X	X	X	
Disenfranch.		X	X	X	X
Corporate vs Ecclesial Ethos		X	X	X	X

**Figure 4 - Table of Listening Session Patterns**

**EMPHASIS ONE – INTERNATIONAL AND BIPOC VOICES**

Format: Formal Listening Sessions and Special Events

***Internationally-Engaged Voices***

Through the vast geographical reach of Mission Co-workers and the talented personnel who carry out CPJ Programs, PMA has a significant global presence. This international engagement involves these PMA employees with the teams from local congregations, NGOs and other organizations doing similar or connected work. Additionally, the PMA Core and LIT have listened to insightful international scholars and ministers who have brought missiological insights into the visioning process. Finally, those very PMA international teams bring valuable experience and insight into the conversation. In order to build a faithful future for PMA’s global engagement, it is crucial that PMA leaders and LIT listen well to these prophetic international voices.

- Global Partners

- Caucus Leaders
- Missiologists
- WM and CPJ Employees working in an international context

Prominent themes from those sessions are summarized below. They confirm WM leadership's initial concern (chronicled above, page X) that, while some very good work is being done and some partnering has been quite effective, vestiges of a colonialist mission philosophy have continued to appear in PMA ministries.

Rev Lydia Neshangwe, pastor of St. Andrews Church and Clerk of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe, provided a brilliant and corrective image for PMA's philosophy of mission at the March 3, 2021 VIP Core Retreat. She quoted the time-honored adage, "Give me a fish, and I eat for a day; teach me to fish and I eat for a lifetime," which she then revised with a simple invitation: instead of thinking that you can teach me to fish, come fish with me by the Zambezi River." As she vividly described the conditions under which people fish by that river, she was presenting a model for cross-cultural global engagement. Rev. Neshangwe's story sets a good context for how Global Partners describe the relational culture that they would find most conducive to effective collaboration. CSC facilitators consistently have heard from partners that they much prefer the language of fellowship and "with-ness" to humanitarian mission, because it rings of relationship and mutual understanding. In response to the central questions posed, the following are summaries and synthesis of the many observations offered in the various listening sessions.

### **What Should Stay**

- *Mutuality and Listening.* Global partners often praised the mission co-workers and CPJ employees with whom they worked for being more open to their ideas than other partners.
- *New Levels of Intra-Agency Communication.* International employees noted an upswing in collaboration across formerly uncrossed lines, prompted by the pandemic's push to online engagement. Increased online communication broke down existing silos and increased the effectiveness of work with partners.

### **What Needs to Go**

Regarding PMA's relationship with global partners, internationally placed voices named these concerns:

- *Vestiges of Colonialism* continue in relationships with partners. Global Partner reports vary relative to the specific PMA employees who work with them. Some praise the mutuality and humble listening of their mission co-worker or CPJ representatives. Others detect an implied sense of cultural superiority that strains the relationship.
- *A White/Western Savior Complex* manifests in some engagement with partners. One disaster aid worker in the Bahamas told how the intervention of PMA aid through the grant process and disaster relief, while well intended, has interrupted the normal cultural habit of mutual community help and produced a direct dependence on outside

help.

- *A Power Differential* prompted by the grant process impedes thriving partnership. Many Global Partners name the grant process as an awkward exception to generally mutual partnership relationships with mission co-workers and CPJ representatives. Money naturally produces a one-up, one-down relationship by itself; but the criteria for granting can amplify this hierarchical sense by conditioning aid on tactics that are outside of the customary approaches of the recipient group.

Internationally-placed PMA employees named several specific obstacles to a fully thriving ministry.

- *Top-Down hierarchy* within PMA organizational culture. This management structure and style can create and/or contribute to a sensed disconnect between “the home office” and MCW-CPJ work on the ground. For some, this sense of top-down power even extends to the Vision Implementation Process itself.
- *Sensed Isolation and Lack of PMA Support*. Some international employees expressed a sense that their voices will not be counted in decision-making and that agile and context-appropriate ministry decisions they might make in their context will ultimately lack Agency financial and administrative backing.
- *Sensed Disenfranchisement*. Some international employees expressed a concern that their input goes unheeded and even unheard in Louisville.
- *Corporate Rather Than Ecclesial Ethos in PMA*. Overall, employees expressed in various terms that they feel “like a cog in a machine.” One veteran of the Agency observed that it feels more like a business now than had been the experience before.

Note: Many employees expressed especial gratitude for having their voices included in this process anonymously, because they often feel reluctance and even fear to speak about these experiences among their Agency superiors.

## **Matthew 25**

There is some overlap within global contexts that connects with PCUSA’s vision of dismantling structural racism, eradicating poverty, and increasing congregational vitality. However, more often than not, where that overlap exists there are also many nuances related to the particular global context.

- *Poverty* was a top concern among Global Partners, mentioned numerous times on every call.
- *Racism* appears as an important factor in some global settings (e.g., Israel-Palestine), but in others it is tribalism, religion, caste, or other forms of suppression.
- *Congregational Vitality* was the least spoken on, though when mentioned it was mentioned in relation to a broader goal of *community* vitality.
- *Other Concerns*. Some Global Partners put forth a variety of other concerns (e.g., climate change and militarism) that are more pressing within their contexts than the

foci PC(USA) has named for the Matthew 25 initiative.

- *The Imposition.* A few Global Partners expressed concern that Matthew 25 was being foisted on them as a requirement “from on high” and that there was no clear explanation or discussion of the specific values or narrative change that emerged as Matt 25.

## **Emerging Global Trends**

We asked all the Global Partners and global ministries employees what they see in their local and regional settings that an agile organization ought to keep its eye on and eventually adjust strategies and tactics to address. These are the broad categories. [See summary in appendix for specifics.]

- *Climate Change/Environmental Justice.*
- *Pandemics (plural).* Covid-19 seems like only the beginning.
- *Economic Strife* is increasing rapidly.
- *Nationalism and Authoritarianism* are on the rise.
- *The Significance of Local and Regional Connectedness* in a globalized world.
- *Relational Ministry is increasingly effective.*
- *Increasing Need for Advocacy by PC(USA)*

These named trends and observations remind us that listening well to the experiences and input of Global Partners and international staff will be an ongoing key to the success of the PC(USA)’s missional function.

## **BIPOC Voices – The PC(USA) Caucus Leaders**

The February Core Team retreat centered perspectives and voices from BIPOC groups who have been historically marginalized. Here are a few highlights that caught the imagination of the VIP group:

- *Attention to Indigenous Populations.* Indigenous voices have detailed the historic harms caused by the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny. They also spoke of the decline of leadership in the indigenous populations of the U.S., which she traced to the misfit of Presbyterian expectations about leadership training. These observations were later amplified by a recent report that describes the role that many Christian Denominations played in operating the “Indigenous boarding schools”, which have devastating and lasting impacts on indigenous communities throughout the US. The Presbyterian Church was very active in this space and should recognize and actively participate in addressing the lasting trauma and cultural harm that continues to manifest.
- *De-westernizing/de-’europeanizing’ of Education and Ordination Processes.* Voices from several BIPOC groups detailed the cultural whiteness and injustice nested in the very European and white-cultured ordination process of the PC(USA).

- *Unequal Resource Distribution.* Several participants named the financial predicament of their congregations, relative to the affluence of other PC(USA) congregations nearby.
- *A Call for Bold and Overdue Progress.* One Latinx voice bemoaned the fact that PMA and the PC(USA) are still asking and failing to answer the same questions as they were a quarter century ago. The awkward relationship between some Latinx churches and the wider PC(USA) was noted, with specific reference to the resource imbalance of churches as a sin within the current structure.

The caucus leaders also helped the Core team by detailing the experience of marginalized ethnic groups within the church and the U.S. culture.

### ***INTERNATIONAL MINISTRY EXPERTS – A PANEL OF MISSIOLOGISTS***

This four-member panel identified significant trends in the way mission is conceived and played out in the 21st century. Each spoke how her or his own perceptions had been formed by their experience within a marginalized group – in the lower castes of South India, as a female in a highly patriarchal Polynesian culture, from the wearying experience of being Christian in Lebanon and Syria, and in the indigenous population of the Southwestern U.S.

#### **Historical Harms of Missionaries**

Three of the four emphasized the cultural harms Christian missionaries have perpetrated by disruptively introducing colonial attitudes to their cultures of origin (though one tempered her critique by noting that her own thriving faith is a consequence of missionaries having taken the initiative and the risk to reach out to her people in the first place).

#### **Historical Contributions of Missionaries**

The fourth member of the panel, whose experience is in the middle-eastern churches of Syria and Lebanon, praised the impact of historic Christian mission by generating health and education movements that continue to impact the region in salutary ways to this day).

### **EMPHASIS TWO: VOICES FROM PMA EMPLOYEES AND THE WIDER PC(USA)**

#### ***Domestically Placed PMA Employees***

Format: Formal Listening Sessions by Open and Specific Individual Invitation 150 PMA employees members in 10 sessions

This listening process provided valuable input, and the themes identified were infused into the subsequent LIT process, both as the CSC team shared employee-listening takeaways in the course of our three months and through the presence of employee voices on the LIT. The observations below reflect repeated themes in the conversations.

#### **What Is Going Well?**

- *Increased Staff Diversity.* The BIPOC and gender-diverse presence in PMA is

- unique within the general PC(USA) and relative to most other workplaces.
- *Significant Work and Ministry*. PMA jobs have purpose in the world.
- *Leadership*. Staff are generally encouraged by Diane Moffett's enthusiasm and leadership.

*The Matthew 25 Initiative* is generally favored among employees because it offers tangible entry points to justice initiatives for PMA and church.

### What Needs to Go?

- *Top-Down/Hierarchical Management*. Employees often mentioned the specific ways that they experienced bureaucratic hierarchy within PMA as an impediment to their effectiveness and their capacity to innovate.
- *White Supremacy and Marginalization of Underrepresented Groups*. Some employees reported painful incidents they had experienced. Most employees recognized the continuing structural and personal role of racial power dynamics in day-to-day interactions within PMA.
- *Squelched Creativity and Discouraged Innovation*. This came up often, especially with employees who do not occupy positions of leadership and power within the system. They feel consigned to carrying out the designs of their superiors, even when they offer ideas for how to improve processes.
- *A Depressed and Angry Ethos Among Employees*. Participants report a tense and often negative workplace ethos. The most direct version of this comment: "PMA is not always a pleasant place to work."
- *Organizational Silos* continue to impede robust collaboration.
- *Corporate Ethos (as opposed to Ecclesial)*. Participants recognize the impossibility of operating an agency as a church, but they wonder if the balance of these two identities might have skewed too far to the corporate. In its most extreme form, one participant commented, "PMA will protect the corporation first, the church second."

### Matthew 25

- *Participants* generally favored the Matthew 25 initiative.
- *Activism*. Employees were proud of the PMA for making a statement about the Breonna Taylor ruling and generally supporting Black Lives Matter.
- *Transmission*. Employees are frustrated by the way the three foci can be interpreted by congregations as a slate of options, rather than an integrated whole.
- *Connected Advocacy*. Individual congregations sometimes resort to charity because they cannot imagine impacting structures all alone.
- *Limitations*. Some are frustrated that climate concerns, gender injustice, and militarism get left aside because of the selection of three foci.
- *Hypocrisy*. Employees often named failings within the PMA's own racial and gender culture as contradictory to this very public Matthew 25 face of the Agency in the wider church and world.

## What should come next?

- *Flatter Organization* through a more decentralized and level management model.
- *Bold Innovation* cultivated by a culture that welcomes new ideas and creative risk-taking and allows for failure without penalty.
- *Racial Equity* through a structural and cultural renovation that replaces white supremacy and other forms of repression with a thriving equality of community that even centers the marginalized.
- *De-siloed Restructuring* that encourages collaboration across current lines of separation within PMA.
- *Justice Activism* should be encouraged in PMA by involving and organizing employees in front-line activism in Louisville or wherever they office.

## THE WIDER PC(USA)

Format: Miscellaneous Listening Sessions

It is also important for voices from around the PC(USA) to inform the visioning process. In this interest, CSC facilitated listening sessions with several other constituent interest groups across the church.

- *OGA and PC(USA) Executives (Press, Pension Fund, etc)*
- *The Vision 2020 Team*  
This group was commissioned by the General Assembly to craft a denominational vision. They expressed some frustration at not being included more fully in the PMA's visioning process.
- *Mission Network Leaders*  
These leaders from across the church connect directly with mission co-workers who are placed internationally. Their voices diverge from the general flow of input CSC has collected, in that this group is considerably more concerned about continuing to keep evangelism as an important element in mission work. The gift they could offer as the agency moves forward is to prompt courageous conversations about what role spreading the specifically Christian message of Jesus will play in the PMA of the future.
- *Young Adults*  
To tap the wisdom and perspective of young voices, the Global Ministry Visioning team helped arrange listening sessions with young adult employees from the PMA and the wider PC(USA) as well as a select number of recent Young Adult Volunteers.
  - *Enthusiasm.* On the one hand, these are vital and hopeful Christian leaders who have experienced significant ministry or belonging through YAV or other youth and young adult ministries.
  - *Frustration.* On the other hand, in each of the listening sessions, CSC facilitators heard versions of this comment about hypocritical exploitation: "The PC(USA) wants to feature our photos in publicity pieces, but they don't want to listen to our ideas or grant our voices any authority."

- *Ageist Structures.* One structural issue that arose is outside the direct influence of PMA, but may be a cause to champion: young adult delegates to General Assembly serve once and then turn over. This transience bodes against permanence of input or vision. Enduring impact of young adult voices would need some structural address of the discontinuity.
- *A Call to Change YAV Funding Structure.* Because Young Adult Volunteers (YAVs) must raise their own support, relatively affluent families or churches constitute the program's majority. Listening session participants called for a renovation of the structure to support widening the economic, ethnic, and cultural variety of participants.

## ***Re-Envisioning: The LIT Process and Directions***

The **Leadership Innovation Team (LIT)** was commissioned to be the primary vehicle for the second aspect of the VIP: **reimagining a generational future of the PMA's culture and ministries**, Matthew 25 and beyond. The group was tailored to the task, including a wide ethnic, cultural, gendered, and age diversity, and spanning different sectors of the Agency staff and church beyond PMA. There is acknowledgement that the LIT was exceptionally diverse as compared to many PC(USA) initiatives. This diverse representation had two exceptions:

- ***LIT lacked active voices of North American indigenous peoples.*** (Two people were invited, but one demurred and, after initially accepting, the other was not able to participate for a variety of reasons.)
- ***Non-US based voices were also underrepresented on LIT.*** The merger of the larger PMA process and the Global Ministry processes happened at an unfortunate time in the establishment of the LIT, resulting in clearly uneven representation between those who operate in and are most familiar with work in the US and those who primarily operate in non-US contexts.

A different balance among participants would almost certainly have brought the issues and experiences of indigenous groups in the U.S. and PMA's international engagement more fully into the LIT conversation. While CSC facilitators attempted to compensate for these gaps in representation, steady indigenous and international perspectives were clearly missed.

Below is a recounting of the LIT's process and discernments. Accompanying links and the several PDF files of the Jamboards developed by the LIT are included here and in a supplemental appendix for future reference. All of this on the hopeful assumption that over the years this will be a highly referenced document and the raw data will support future deliberations.

### **Move One – Becoming a Team (May 3, 6 and 8)**

To honor the transition from the Reflection phase to the Reenvisioning phase, all who walked the Monday retreats together Nov-Apr and the newly formed LIT gathered together for a commissioning. The Core Team reflected on that Monday journey to offer a sense of context and continuity, then commissioned the LIT boldly to reimagine PMA's generational

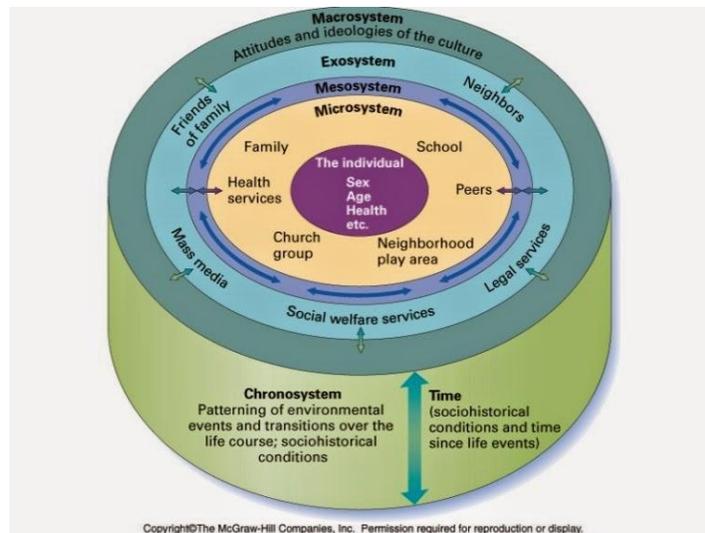
future. The significance of this passing of the torch was clear, even though all but three members of the retreat group continued into the LIT process.

The LIT began building itself as a team by acquainting itself with its guiding purpose and some primary values that would guide its work. Howard Thurman’s “Power of the Genuine” set the tone for the quest, and [Otto Scharmer’s Four Levels of Listening](#) (from TheoryU) called the group to open their minds to new facts and ideas, their hearts to other people’s experiences in empathy, and their wills and spirits to an unfolding future. The first sessions also set a pattern for LIT engagement throughout the group’s work: breakout groups would do the lion’s share of the diagnostic work that would move the larger project forward. In this case, that work involved *identifying places of functional and dysfunctional listening within the culture of the PMA and/or PC(USA).*

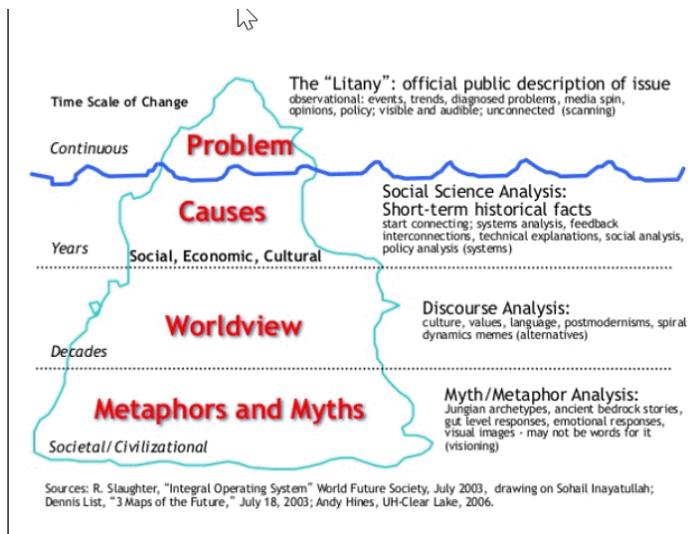
### Move Two: The Making of Persons and Peoples (May 20,22, June 3, 5, 14)

Theoretical models for understanding the formation of persons, groups, and peoples would become LIT’s toolbox throughout its work. The first two theoretical models for understanding...

1. How individual lives are formed by the social influences that surround them ([Uri Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory – EST](#)); and
2. How the problematics and paths to thriving in communities get formed by their myths and metaphors, their worldviewing, and the systems, structures and institutions that impact them through all stages of life. ([Sohail Inayatullah’s Causal Layered Analysis – CLA](#))



**Figure 5 - Uri Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory**



**Figure 6 - Sohail Inayatullah's Causal Layered Analysis**

These theoretical doorways opened the way for conversations allowing LIT members to acquaint themselves with one another more significantly and join the shared task more fully.

- *Life-Sharing*. When LIT looked at EST, the breakout sessions gave space for people to share their life stories with one another, including the forces and systems that helped and hurt their thriving.
- *Momentum-Building*. Engaging CLA built a personal entry point into LIT's understanding of how groups grow and change, establishing a momentum for deeper conversations of all kinds through the rest of the LIT process.

These theoretical models also helped LIT members make a transition from group formation to their charged purpose of defining a preferred future for PMA's culture and ministry.

To begin this process, breakout groups applied the Causal Layered Analysis to five (5) specific ministries or projects currently undertaken by the PMA (See Appendix C). Causal Layered Analysis continued to guide the LIT's work as the group identified the current shape of PMA and possible reasons for it. The timing of this work coincided with the 100th-year anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre, so LIT engaged in a meta-analysis of the deeper historical and cultural causes that lay behind that tragic event.

This historical analysis paved the way for a contemporary one. Rev. Jessica Vasquez-Torres and Rev. Shawna Bowman led the LIT in Anti-Racism training. Through this very brief introduction to the subjects, LIT members developed a shared language and began to understand how antiracism and decoloniality might be built into ministry structures and relationships as PMA builds a preferred narrative of a shared future.

The team identified several practices, structural elements and philosophies that reflect white

supremacist and colonial mindsets and should be eliminated from PMA culture. These include:

- structural/bureaucratic patterns within PMA that reflect White northern European cultural hegemony;
- relational patterns within PMA that continue to marginalize BIPOC staff;
- a distribution of resources within PMA that does not reflect the Agency’s professed value on equity;
- the institutional habit of granting traditionally-powerful voices in the denomination (e.g., large, mostly-white churches and their leaders) with undue testimonial authority.

Internalizing Ecological Systems Theory and Causal Layered Analysis prepared the LIT members to begin imagining the structural, narrative, institutional, and discursive forces that contribute to perpetuating structural racism, systemic poverty, and other problematics that face the Agency, church, and world. An extra Monday session helped the Team deepen its sense that this is essential preliminary work toward establishing a shared language and analytical framework.

### Putting the Tools to Work and Defining Values (June 15, 17, 22, 29 and July 1)

At this point, LIT was ready to turn its attention to the future guided by an analytical framework called STEEP analysis. Members began to look at how existing and shifting Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental, and Political values will impact the future of PMA’s work in the world (See Appendix D).



In this context, it became key to enter a preliminary conversation to clarify LIT’s sense of the core values that should guide PMA into the future. As STEEP reveals values that are shifting outside the church and Agency, what enduring core values should guide the work of the mission agency so that it can be both prophetic in and responsive to the emerging future? In breakout groups and whole-group conversation, the team identified core

**Figure 7 - Jamboard of the PMA Future**  
*values that will shape the future of the PMA and its work internally, with the church, and in the world. These core values will appear below in a major section on the PMA’s Values, Vision, and Mission.*

To begin applying the named values, LIT turned next to imagine a “Museum of the PMA.” In line with a futurist imaginative video example, (Add link), the LIT members were asked **“What aspects of PMA should we leave behind?”** (i.e., relegate them to the Museum of PMA) and **“What aspects of PMA should we keep or add?”** (the Preferred Future of PMA). Breakout groups used Jamboards to discuss and make lists for each question. Beginning an inquiry

process that would continue throughout the remainder of the LIT sessions, the Team was asked to identify current values and practices of PMA that should be *kept, left behind, reimagined, and added*.

In a next step, LIT then used the museum and future Jamboards to “exegete” themselves and determine what deep values lie behind each of those decisions to jettison or to keep. In lengthy breakout sessions *LIT proceeded to name how defining the values becomes crucial to making specific decisions about what PMA will become*. Those values are specified among the final findings and recommendations in this report.



Figure 8 - Jamboard of PMA Values

### Missiology Panel (June 22)

In the midst of its flow toward envisioning a preferred future for PMA, the LIT stopped to honor international voices in that process. To compensate the near absence of internationally-placed members within the LIT, CSC facilitated this stand-alone session, which featured important missiological voices from the field and academy who could bring, not only a report of the way mission is currently being enacted internationally, but also cutting-edge theory on how it ought to be lived out as the PMA and Church move forward. The four international voices brought very diverse histories and perspectives into engagement with one another:

- [James Teneti](#) is from South India and currently serves on the faculty of Union Theological Seminary.
- [Seforosa Carroll](#) was born into a small Polynesian community and raised in Fiji. She now serves as program director with the World Council of Churches in Geneva.
- [Hadi Ghantous](#) is from Lebanon and serves now in the churches of Syria and Lebanon.
- [June Lorenzo](#) brings an indigenous voice from the southwestern U.S. and expertise in decolonial work within that history.

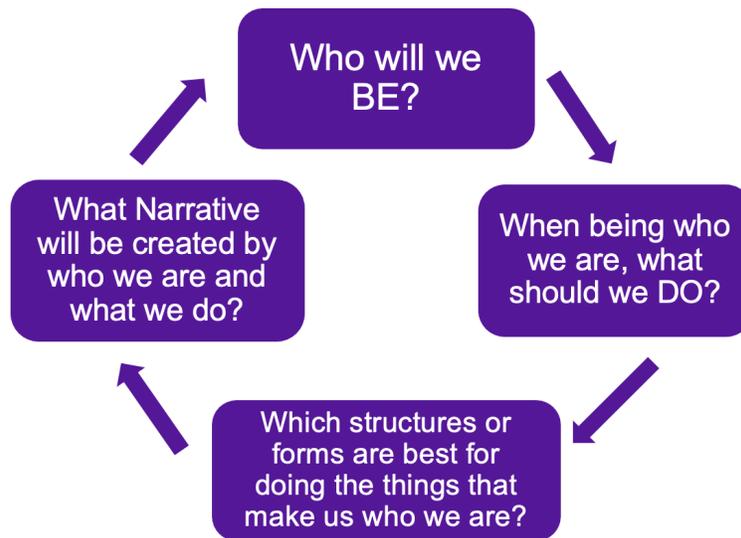
The interaction of these four gave LIT new insights into options and opportunities to envision the future of PMA’s international engagement. Key takeaways have been folded into the report on international voices above.

### Move Three: Building a Preferred Narrative of a Shared Future (July 12, 15, and 17)

The LIT turned next to a crucial structure question: **“What needs to happen within PMA so that the effort and work done by the LIT team is not just an exercise, but actually leads to a**

**transformative moment?”** To begin answering that question, the consultant team laid out the agenda for the remainder of the LIT process: a playing out of the “cycle of inquiry.”

In applying this rubric, LIT turned its attention first to international ministries, asking **“Why does PMA engage internationally? What is the manner of that engagement? And what do international voices tell us about how they would like PMA to engage?”**



**Figure 9 - The Cycle of Inquiry**

The centered voices of the evening belonged to global partners (through a report of Global Partner listening sessions) and then to LIT members in the room whose work puts them in international ministry. They shared powerful experiences and impressions that helped the whole group begin to imagine a better way forward in PMA’s international engagement.

The natural next step asked how the values LIT identified should be applied to determine whether and how to reshape the current program portfolio of the Agency. The question involves defining scope: **in a world of endless need and possibilities for ministry, where should the PMA focus its work for highest and most vision-and-mission-aligned impact?** To help ground this practice of application, the group identified some *values, factors, and metrics* they and others can use to determine the scope of PMA’s work.

**The team struggled the most here, when they began to realize that one outcome of defining scope might possibly be discontinuing or reshaping existing ministries.** Several people acknowledged that determining on their own what work to start and stop was not a muscle they had previously been asked, expected, or allowed to exercise. This is also driven by the existence of designated funding mechanisms that do not provide for sunset or redefining the scope of work. This is going to be a critical capability going forward and should be a part of the skills leadership plans to train.

## **Finale: Defining Vision and Mission**

To finish the LIT journey together, the group prayed, listened to some inspiring music, and then intensively engaged what **vision, mission, and enduring values** would carry this work forward through a generation of PMA. The final insights and recommendations of this report include a statement of identity, a vision statement, a mission statement, and a values portfolio that are a composite of the work of the LIT. The identity, vision, and mission statements, and values portfolio will serve as the basis to guide all other recommendations contained in this report.

# SECTION IV - “Form Follows Function”

## -- PMA Vision, Mission, and Values

### Leaving what doesn’t work behind to shape PMA’s future

This section describes with some detail and nuance the process of arriving at the proposed vision and mission statement and list of essential and important values for the Agency going forward. The detailed process is presented in an effort to reinforce the facilitation team’s commitment to not impose its own values on the process, but rather to demonstrate how all of our proposals emerged from the reflection and reimagining aspects of this process. The first portion of this chapter gives an overview of the many processes and different approaches to elicit imagination about the vision, mission values and structure. The second portion of this chapter presents the CSC proposed language for vision and mission and a proposed list of values. In that section there is a discussion of how each of these can be used to effectively drive forward the desired transformation. It is clear, however, that just having vision and mission statements and values lists written will not result in culture transformation unless there are concerted efforts to engage all members of the PMA in conversation about the significance and how to manifest these in the life of the Agency.

### Overview

The Vision Implementation Process (VIP) built upon the insights from the multiple listening sessions and included a number of guiding questions to help the LIT collaboratively brainstorm what the vision, mission, values and structure of a transformed Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) might be. These questions invited the LIT to think about what PMA practices, structures, ways of being, and more that they wanted to relegate to the past, what they wanted to see in the future, and how the organization needed to be in order to enact that transformed entity. The questions were:

- What would you include in the Museum of PMA/PC(USA) History?
- In the future that you see emerging, what is the contribution of the PC(USA) and how is its missional function enacted? and
- In order to make the contribution we’ve identified and to enact the missional function in the way we’ve described, who must we be?

Part of this framing was inspired by a poem<sup>1</sup> that imagined a world where undesired practices and objects were no longer in use but only looked at when visiting a museum of history, and a video<sup>2</sup> imagining a desired future having already arrived, that brought forth

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<sup>1</sup> “Field Trip to the Museum of Human History” by Franny Choi - <https://soundcloud.com/franny-choi/field-trip-to-the-museum-of-human-history-by-franny-choi>

<sup>2</sup> “A Message from the Future II: The Years of Repair” by Naomi Klein - [https://theintercept.com/2020/10/01/naomi-klein-message-from-future-covid/?fbclid=IwAR0HubJA9jb\\_UaSAIHixp4uQ0Cb30iXdaf7AH0v7H0o0nPmDxIMRSRBzP1s](https://theintercept.com/2020/10/01/naomi-klein-message-from-future-covid/?fbclid=IwAR0HubJA9jb_UaSAIHixp4uQ0Cb30iXdaf7AH0v7H0o0nPmDxIMRSRBzP1s)

abundance and a thriving planet. The rationale behind this kind of exploration was that the more the team is clear on what they want to leave behind and what they want to create in its place, the clearer they will be able to articulate what structures and processes will be needed to get there -- backwards planning with the end in mind.

The LIT generated substantive content from these questions that then helped them extrapolate the underlying values within those imaginings. There were three questions that shaped the values conversations:

- What values currently guide PMA's work?
- Which values should the Agency keep, leave, add, or reinterpret? (these questions and the rhythm of inquiry was repeated throughout the LIT process); and
- What are the *values and worldviewings that allow a shift towards this emerging future*, or what are the values needed?<sup>3</sup>

In whole group and break out groups, the LIT had an opportunity to contemplate the above questions and: articulate the values currently operating within the Agency, reflect on the values they wanted to keep, leave, add, or reimagine, and name the values that were essential to moving PMA into the future vision they were crafting together. This exploration of values occurred over the course of ten (10) activities interspersed throughout the LIT process. Those include:

- Otto Scharmer's process of listening from and emerging future
- Causal Layered analysis to discover myths, metaphors, and worldviewings that drive values and shape culture and structures
- A view towards an emerging future through consideration of the Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental and Political values shifts (a STEEP analysis)
- Museum of PC(USA)/PMA History
- Message from a PMA Future
- Letters from a PMA Future
- Values to keep, leave behind, add, or reinterpret and where are they seen
- Brainstorm of the values & worldviews necessary to shift into the future
- Values, Metrics, and Factors jamboard
- Values prioritization survey

Along with these activities, the LIT had multiple conversations regarding values that were embedded in other sessions and activities, including the vision and mission statement brainstorming. From these conversations and collaborative exercises, there were twenty-five values that rose to the top as the most necessary. Through the prioritization survey, the CSC team broke that list of twenty-five values into eight essential values and seventeen important ones.

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<sup>3</sup> The "values", "worldviewings" and "emerging futures" concepts were applications of the Otto Scharmer, Causal Layered Analysis, and STEEP analysis that the LIT had participated in and were now being asked to synthesize those previous learnings and insights.

The primary tools used to document ideas from the LIT included Google Slides and Jamboard, which allow for real-time, collaborative editing. The Jamboards and Slides that document the LIT’s creative thinking on PMA’s history, future, vision, mission, and values can be found in Appendices E through J.

### **Museum of PC(USA)/PMA History**

LIT members were invited to generate as many ideas as they could to describe the practices, structures, etc. that they wanted to leave behind (i.e. relegate to the organization's history) when imagining a transformed PMA. The group as a whole then clustered their ideas and the clusters largely fell into two broader categories: Bureaucratic Structure and Governance, and Fear and Domination. In the table below, LIT-created clusters are found underneath each category (in no particular order). Appendix E includes the specific ideas outlined within each cluster<sup>4</sup>

<b>To Leave Behind</b>	
<b>Bureaucratic Structure &amp; Governance</b>	<b>Fear &amp; Domination</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Process &amp; Protocol</li> <li>● Worship “What we’ve always done”</li> <li>● Old school bureaucracy</li> <li>● Building office/structure</li> <li>● Hegemonic Technology</li> <li>● Ivory Tower</li> <li>● Money</li> <li>● Rigid &amp; narrow ways of being</li> <li>● Organization (structure)</li> <li>● Sociology of Denomination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Power over</li> <li>● Oppression</li> <li>● Missiology</li> <li>● Critique of “Missionary”</li> <li>● White Patriarchy</li> <li>● Colonialism</li> <li>● Race (racism; whiteness)</li> </ul>

**Figure 10 - What PMA Leaves Behind as Defined by LIT**

The ideas presented within this table and from this exercise suggest that hierarchy and domination persist not only within the organizational structure and practices of PMA, but also within its culture. These themes were also expressed in many of the earlier listening sessions (See Appendices A and B). There was concern about rigid, top-down approaches to partnership, planning, and decision making, a bureaucratic and corporate feel to the organization, vertical leadership, and a feeling that “things have to be done a certain way.” Furthermore, team members identified experiences of preference towards older staff, a lack of acknowledgement

<sup>4</sup>These appendices should be studied by the transformation management team to get clearer insights of the qualities of relationships within the Agency staff and between the agency and its ecosystem that are important to the LIT members.

of how internal systems of power cause harm and trauma, how racism and white supremacy show up in interactions, ideology, and structures within PC(USA), and that paternalism, colonial thinking and practice, and hierarchy show up within the organization and in partnerships.

## Future Visioning

Upon gaining clarity on what the LIT team wanted to leave behind, they were then asked to imagine a future PC(USA)PMA. The guiding question for brainstorming was, “*In the future that you see emerging, what is the contribution of the PC(USA) and how is its missional function enacted?*” A variety of values and practices emerged from this exercise. After an initial brainstorming, LIT members were asked again to cluster their ideas into some groupings. The following clusters were identified (includes values *and* practices):

- Mutuality (reciprocal and collaborative)
- Prophetic witness
- Liberation and wholeness
- Going out (Missio Dei/being sent among people/incarnational)
- Jesus is already there/here
- Shift who/what is essential
- Radical (not performative)
- Reparations
- Education (thought leader in breaking colonial barriers, walk alongside rather than leave behind)
- Relationships rather than mission (witness/collaboration)
- Truth-gathering/telling
- Center the marginalized
- What we do to our neighbor (Relational)
- What we do to/think about God (Theological)
- How we build structures

For the Jamboards exercise see Appendix F.

In addition to the LIT-led idea clustering, CSC pulled only the *practices* from the Jamboards and briefly analyzed them to identify five themes, compiled into the following chart along with a few ideas that further specify each:

Future Practices				
Holistic reparation practice with BIPOC communities	Truth-telling, repair, and healing practices	Theology in practice	Shifts in organizational structural practices	Advocacy and political practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reparations - Accountability to BIPOC</li> <li>• Any person of color who is considering ministry from the moment they announce they will never pay a dime for their education.</li> <li>• Serve as an example/witness/ collaborator with other faith traditions related to DEI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repentance, Healing, Repair - Acknowledge complicity</li> <li>• Create structures for truth-telling &amp; difficult conversations</li> <li>• Dismantle white supremacist structures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embrace a culturally accurate vision and ethos of Jesus</li> <li>• Eliminate belief as a barrier to building community</li> <li>• The missional function of the church is disseminated through a distributed model that puts many more educators/facilitators in the field--closer to the congregations and the communities they serve.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decentralize PMA organization</li> <li>• Deployed staffing model instead of hierarchical institutional systems.</li> <li>• Church buildings converted to affordable housing along with malleable worship space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PCUSA should support and advocate for policies that build an economic system that works well for everyone.</li> <li>• Be allies and partners in community organizing - "on the ground" in authentic relationships and connections (rather than mission)</li> <li>• Advocate to protect all of Creation</li> </ul>

**Figure 11 - Future Practices as Defined by LIT**

To see a complete list of the practices that fit within these themes, see Appendix M.

These practices towards a transformed PMA were created ahead of the vision and mission drafting. It will be important that the practices implemented be functions of the Agency’s mission statement.

***How the Presbyterian Mission Agency must be***

In addition to visioning how a transformed PC(USA)/PMA will enact its missional function in the future, LIT members were invited to generate ideas on the question of *who must PMA be* in

order to move into this future iteration. While this was the question LIT responded to, upon later reflection the CSC team realized that LIT members’ responses actually spoke to *how* PMA must be, rather than *who*. Instead of describing actions and roles, the LIT was identifying values, relational qualities and cultural characteristics. Six (6) themes emerged:

How must PMA be?					
Be alive fully, generative living, connectional collaboration, and be com/passionate	Be authentic (a.k.a. Stop lying)	Be mutually accountable	Be radical followers of Christ	Be bold risk-takers	Be humble
<i>Open to mistakes</i>  <i>Flexible</i>  <i>Creative Liberating Engaged</i>	<i>Prophetic</i>  <i>Courageous</i>  <i>Truth-tellers</i>  <i>Receptive listeners</i>  <i>Bold Honest</i>	<i>Assume responsibility</i>  <i>Relational (not just connectional)</i>  <i>Trust partners Trustworthy</i>	<i>Better Christians than Presbyterians</i>  <i>Love God not church</i>  <i>Servants Move people from pews to the streets</i>	<i>Celebrate failure</i>  <i>Willing to lose something</i>  <i>End things with grace when time to move on</i>	<i>Permeable</i>  <i>Empty</i>  <i>Give away power and control</i>  <i>Listen, learn, leave well</i>  <i>Center “least of these”</i>

**Figure 12 -- “What PMA Will Be” as Defined by LIT**

These ways of being can and should help shape how PMA actualizes the vision and mission. As *form follows function, function also follows form* (what we do is shaped by who we are).

### Preferred Narratives of a Shared Future

Another future-focused exercise the LIT participated in was the crafting of letters from future generations. These letters were imagined to be written to current LIT members, by children from the future who were reflecting on PMA’s transformation initiated by the current LIT work. These Letters From the Future were compiled into a virtual book format and edited by CSC for design purposes; no content was changed (see Appendix N). Although not all LIT members participated in this activity, among those who did write letters several themes emerged:

#### More Collaborative Leadership and More Decentralized Structure

LIT members dream of PC(USA) existing without silos and without hierarchies; instead, they see a future of bottom-up leadership -- where leadership is derived from the voices at the margins, in the communities, and among the partners -- decision making power being shared

with more people, and decisions being made by various models of consensus (which is not the same as unanimity) , rather than Robert’s Rules. This transformed leadership is practical, diverse, and communicates with clarity and transparency. The letters collaboratively craft a vision of a decentralized organizational structure. They imagine regional or hyper-local teams who focus on community level needs. One LIT member describes “clusters of human competence” that are equipped to address particular areas of injustice; another imagines regional staff that support congregations and presbyteries; and a third describes “Community Advocacy Partners” who can be found around the world.

When it comes to structure, some letters even envision new uses for the PC(USA) *physical* structure in Louisville, KY. One person suggests that the Louisville offices only be used for administrative purposes and that the Witherspoon building be sold; another imagines greener buildings that are less reliant on fossil fuels; one member puts forth the idea of converting the building into sustainable, livable structures for climate refuge should there ever be need.

One member offers some ideas for the General Assembly (GA) in their letter. GA would meet bimonthly online between sessions every two years, and those primary sessions would be used to build community in locations that are accessible to more people. (As this letter imagines a new PMA structure and governance, they acknowledge that the entity would lose some of its independence.) Another acknowledges that “death of self” is necessary for this radical transformation. This way of being will enable PMA to move in a way that at times may be seen as controversial but ultimately will be well respected because of the values that center them.

### **Reimagining Mission**

When reflecting on current mission work, most letters have much to offer around reimagining that practice altogether. Each letter highlights mutuality in relationships as a primary quality of all engagements. LIT members envision changes such as: **pausing** the sending of Mission Co-Workers (MCW) so that there can be an in-depth assessment of the practice; **requiring** members and employees to learn the patriarchal and colonial history of mission work along with its positive contributions; **sharing** resources in relational and non-patriarchal ways; and **defining** time-limited context- specific MCW assignments. The visions also describe distributing domestic mission activity around the U.S. to support churches and build local relationships.

They also picture welcoming non-US, church workers to serve in the U.S., While some LIT letters have envisioned eliminating the name “Presbyterian Mission Agency” altogether, because of the historical harms mission has caused, another suggests that rather than change the name there be a deliberate focus on teaching from that name, and reinterpreting and rebranding what PMA stands for in its new form.

Many of the letters envision and propose new language for the PMA). One member called the transformation of PMA as the next “Great Awakening.” Another offered the term “Ministry partners” rather than missionaries. A couple other letters simply speak as if the PC(USA) names are already in the past, saying things such as “I think it used to be called the ‘Presbyterian Church USA’ back in your day” and “former Presbyterian Mission Agency.” This

suggest that some LIT members desire to shed any negative association(s) that are connected to the name and language of PMA.

### **Inclusive and Mutual Relationships**

The PMA of the future is welcoming and inclusive of people from all walks of life. Within this new organizational structure, employees experience trusted relationships with their colleagues and feel valued and accepted just as they are. LIT members are dreaming of an equitable and accessible ordination process for more People of Color and women to serve as clergy. Two letters mention intergenerational and collaborative relationships, lifting up a “Mentory” model of connection (rather than membership model), as well as an idea that YAV partner with older adults who are also interested in mission. In this future, PMA is a bold and courageous leader that is willing to take risks and radical actions in support of justice for people and the planet. It is an organization that values and includes LGBTQ+ folks, People of Color, and young people.

This transformed organization is diverse, anti-racist, engages technology creatively, and is not only unafraid of but *embraces* failure as necessary along the path to future success. As LIT imagines a break-down of corporate structures, they see abundant opportunity to dismantle white, male, hetero-normative power and privilege, build bridges, and encouraging others to tell their stories and follow their dreams. In this work environment and culture, employees are excited to stay with PMA for a long time.

When it comes to the global community, LIT members articulate the importance of relationships that are beneficial to all who are part. They recognize the wisdom found around the world and seek an international advisory panel to determine direction and priorities for PMA ministry. This future PMA stands with asylum seekers and builds a multi-racial, ecumenical community of faith that includes everyone. One person even shares the idea of a “Christian Reunification Project” that dismantles multiple denomination structures. LIT members see a future where Ministry Partners come from around the world, and where PMA learns from global churches rather than “doing mission.”

As part of this new way of being, LIT members envision meaningful, reciprocal, equitable, and authentic relationship building among community members who are driving the priorities for PMA work; those who are most impacted by injustice are at the center and leading change efforts. PMA comes alongside those with whom they are building, rather than taking charge.

### **Embracing Advocacy**

The future letters describe a PMA more fully engaged in organizing, policy, and advocacy work that positively influences local and national transformation. Problems are addressed at their roots in addition to the more visible symptoms, rather than being ignored altogether. PMA) of the future takes bold action on climate issues and its impact, puts forth radically comprehensive poverty initiatives, marches, writes proposals and petitions, and speaks out against injustice.

### **Repair of historical harms**

The letters from the future outline a PMA that embraces repair. LIT members understand that acknowledging and making repairs for that harm is possible and important. Writers proposed that PMA take steps towards repentance and reconciliation, and make an apology to communities who have been negatively impacted by the church's support of enslavement and colonialism; but they also acknowledge that repentance, confession and apology alone are insufficient. They specifically imagine PMA leading a "new relationship of equality and justice...between our Presbyterian Church in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Presbyterian Church" as well as a new economic and political model in Puerto Rico.

### **In Summary**

The future PMA is a decentralized agency that embodies mutual relationship, practices listening, learning, and being led by communities most impacted by injustice, and acknowledges harms it's contributed to and makes amends for those; an organization that leverages its power and influence to change national policy and eliminate historically harmful practices, building narratives for the better. It takes a regional approach to its work, takes radical actions to address issues at their roots, is bold enough to risk everything in the name of justice, makes decisions in favor of climate resiliency, is open to the wisdom of the global community, and moves from a place of courage, love, hospitality, welcome, respect, boldness and mutuality.

## ***Identity, Vision, Mission, and Values***

**An organization's identity is the origin and motivating force for all its activities.**

An identity statement answers the "Who are we?" question and describes what exists in the group before they even lift a finger. Because its identity is primarily defined in relationship to God, a Christian organization also asks "Whose are we?" and "How can we?" -- the questions of belonging and empowerment. Answers to these questions establish the firm grounding from which the Agency will specify its vision and mission.

### **IDENTITY**

***The Presbyterian Mission Agency is a band of disciples, guided by the Holy Spirit to continue a movement launched by Jesus Christ to welcome the realm of God on earth.***

**An explicit statement of vision, mission, and values is essential to Agency transformation.**

A clear vision, mission, and set of values support the core purpose and functioning of any organization. With regard to the possibility of inspiring work and providing guidance for decision making. The Agency's current vision and mission statements are not helpful in their current

forms. They are not prominently located within the life of the Agency in ways that serve to inspire staff or guide decisions, and they are long and vague and, therefore, confusing. This presents a challenge because it compromises the ability for the Agency to move decisively in its purpose, it leaves the Agency vulnerable to the whims and winds of others, and it creates confusion and dissonance within the staff and how the Agency operates.

Based on conversations and activities conducted with the LIT and consonant with ideas expressed throughout the reflection phase of the VIP, this section proposes a Vision statement, a Mission statement, and a list of essential and important values.

- A. A **vision statement** is the guiding light of an organization; it is the moon that pulls the organizational tide, it is the sun that the organizational plant turns its face towards. A well-crafted vision statement is a bold representation of the future that the organization (sometimes in tandem with others) has determined *must* arrive. Possessing a clear vision enables the organization to have a very clear direction for their work -- it's the '*why*' of an organization, it's purpose. The most successful vision statements have broad **acceptance** among staff of an organization; even if they aren't entirely accepting of how the organization does their work, the staff remain invested because they're compelled by the strong vision.

## VISION

***PMA is working towards a just, radically inclusive, and relational future that is free of violence and domination, that celebrates and values all of creation, where there are no more margins, and where God's love and grace is felt by all.***

- B. A **mission statement** describes the mechanism(s) that moves the organization towards their vision. The mission articulates how -- how an organization is contributing to ensuring the vision comes to fruition, and what their proactive part is in building towards that vision. The most successful mission statements are well-known by staff within an organization, and connect with the kinds of tasks, services, projects, functions, etc. that the organization decides to enact. Mission statements answer four essential questions: What role does the organization play? what specifically does the organization do, with whom? and for what end?

<b>MISSION</b>
<p><b><i>As a convener of sacred spaces, the PMA inspires, equips, and connects congregations, mid-councils, other entities of the PC(USA) and our partners locally and globally to do justice, to repair historical harms and to nurture disciples of Jesus;</i></b></p> <p><b><i>the PMA listens to, learns from and co-labors with communities forced to the margins, and connects them to the relationships and resources needed to eradicate systemic poverty, dismantle structural racism, end militarism, and address our climate crisis.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>To do this, the PMA provides:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b><i>context specific accompaniment</i></b></li><li>● <b><i>assistance with the identification and development of innovative approaches, and</i></b></li><li>● <b><i>funds to support local and regional initiatives.</i></b></li></ul>

CSC offers these definitions to further clarify the mission statement:

- ***convener:*** A person or entity that organizes and/or provides the online or in-person space for a group to gather. A convener allows the space to unfold at the will and direction of the group gathering. A convener may offer guidance and support to connect people, but ultimately follows the agenda of those gathering.
- ***sacred space:*** A patient space where there is room for Spirit guidance to emerge. A space where the limits of human capacity are acknowledged and thus there is an agreement to release effort and allow for God's full presence.
- ***co-labor:*** To participate in the labor needs of others; engaging in collective work from a place of mutuality -- recognizing that the labor will be most doable and successful when shared.

C. **Values:** If a vision statement is the guiding light of an organization and the mission statement is the mechanism that moves the organization towards that light, then the **values serve as the compass** that helps guide the Agency to discern the most integrous path to the ultimate destination. Organizational values can shape the vision itself and are embedded within an organization’s structure and culture. Values are important because they influence the totality of how an organization exists and operates, both internally and externally. **The values underpin the organizational culture by focusing on the question of what are important qualities and considerations in all of the organization’s decisions regarding relationships, resources, structures, and testimonial authority.**

VALUES	
Essential Values	Important Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Authenticity</i></li> <li>● <i>Creativity &amp; Imagination</i></li> <li>● <i>Decoloniality/Anti-racism</i></li> <li>● <i>Diversity</i></li> <li>● <i>Humility</i></li> <li>● <i>Justice</i></li> <li>● <i>Love</i></li> <li>● <i>Mutuality</i></li> <li>● <i>Spirit-Alignment / Being Spirit-Led</i></li> <li>● <i>Ubuntu</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Accountability</i></li> <li>● <i>Boldness</i></li> <li>● <i>Church</i></li> <li>● <i>Collaboration</i></li> <li>● <i>Community</i></li> <li>● <i>Compassion</i></li> <li>● <i>Connectionality</i></li> <li>● <i>Equitable</i></li> <li>● <i>Grace</i></li> <li>● <i>Openness</i></li> <li>● <i>Partnership</i></li> <li>● <i>Passion</i></li> <li>● <i>Relationships</i></li> <li>● <i>Repentance</i></li> <li>● <i>Truth</i></li> </ul>

# Section V - Recommendations

The recommendations are structured as a reflection of the CounterStories Consulting proposition that organizational culture can be understood, maintained, and transformed by addressing the organizational (web of) relationships, (amount, distribution, prioritization and control of) resources, (intention that explains) structures, and (which people/populations are given full) testimonial authority<sup>5</sup>.

In this section, we first describe the general challenges that The Mission Agency will face in each of these four dimensions of organizational transformation followed by a series of recommendations. Some of the recommendations are within the purview of the President/Executive Director of the Mission Agency, others will require PMA Board actions and a few recommendations may require renegotiating relationships with other units of the larger church. CSC is not sufficiently expert regarding decision making and lines of authority within the PMA/ PMAB/ PC(USA) structure to indicate which recommendations are the proper purview of which level or unit of the Church. Following the presentation of all the recommendations, there will be a list of proposed early steps toward transformation and steps that will require time and structural change, but should begin implementation immediately to establish the context for subsequent transformation steps.

## *Relationships*

One of the highest values articulated in the listening sessions, by the PMA Core team and by the members of the LIT was that of relationships. Mutual and dignified relationships are a key element of building congregational vitality. Also, relationships, in the form of social capital and action networks will be a vital element to allow congregations and communities to address structural racism and systemic poverty (as well as the climate crisis and militarism).

**The Challenge to Transformation:** Relational strategies require a reorientation of measures of success away from prioritization of quantity, outcomes, and speed and a rebalancing to give primacy to strength of relationships and inclusion as key indicators. Relational strategies, especially those that seek to provide effective and meaningful responses to systemic and structural efforts (poverty and racism) and even the institutional change requirements for building congregational vitality require long term investments, commitments to extended inclusive participation and skills for network weaving, asset-based development, facilitation, and organizing.

## **Recommendations**

Shifting to primarily relationally-focused strategies will have significant implications for location and expertise of employees, how their scope of work is established, and how employees are supervised. These are recommendations to accomplish the desired decentralization:

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<sup>5</sup> *Testimonial authority* is a concept best described by Miranda Fricker in her text *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing* (Oxford 2007)

- a. *The Agency should adopt a flatter and more decentralized structure. Where employees are physically located* – The employees will best operate relationally if the vast majority are *decentralized*, in some ways similar to the already existing models for the World Mission and Compassion Peace and Justice ministry areas. This will emphasize to congregations, presbyteries, and communities that there has been a structural shift towards relationality. While most decentralized employees are located in action clusters within specific communities or regions, in order to advance advocacy and repair of historical harms, certain staff might well be located within national organizations that are working on those issues with whom which PC(USA) is seeking to or already partnering.
- b. *The nature of employees' 'expertise'* – Many employees currently have or are developing expertise in specific service sectors and form operational silos (hunger, education, race/equity, women's intercultural ministries, immigration). A relational shift would best be advanced by employees developing expertise in relational practices such as network weaving, community organizing, collective impacts, asset-based community development, and similar frameworks. Team members would also have to have a balance of skills that are likely to include designing and facilitating courageous or difficult conversations, and coming alongside community advocates in their localities.
- c. *The inability to predetermine the work of employees* – The PMA team members would be organized semi-holocratically with an emphasis on convening, listening to community concerns, leading by belonging, and building at the pace of community. Organic, responsive, elicited, community-defined agendas would determine the scope of work. The communities with which the team engages should always be given the opportunity and responsibility to “define, lead, own, benefit from, and sustain”<sup>6</sup>the local and regional transformations.
- d. The emphasis of *'supervision' as a relational practice (“mentorary”)* that constantly improves relational skills and innovates networking strategies among the team working in the various decentralized placements. This type of supervision is also necessarily trauma-informed. When team members live in marginalized communities and experience the lives of the people, there will inevitably be primary and secondary exposure to traumagenic histories. The team members should be informed about the implications of trauma and the “supervisory” support should have a strong focus and intention for building resilience and responding to team and community trauma<sup>8</sup>
- e. *Resources allocation*: The budget format currently directs resources to service specific

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<sup>6</sup> This five-part framework was developed by David Anderson Hooker for community engagement practice that precedes the CSC engagement with PC(USA) but is equally applicable here.

<sup>7</sup> This new word is a combination of mentor and missionary. It reflects both in the ‘supervisory’ relationships and also in the mutuality of relationships experienced by those team members engaged with communities.

<sup>8</sup> PMA has taken initial steps in this regard with the introduction of the STAR (Strategies of Trauma Awareness and Resilience) and Transforming Historical Harms frameworks during All-Staff development days. More extensive exposure to these or other approaches should be built into the resources allocation for community located teams and their support/‘supervisory’ resources.

concerns – education, hunger, disaster, etc. The ability to redesignate and pool funds may currently be limited by resource funding structures. There is an effort (or at least conversation within the Mission Engagement and Support (MES Team) about restructuring resource pools to eliminate as many restrictions on programmatic flexibility as can possibly be eliminated. While this is not a transformation that can be accomplished with one decision or action it will be essential, as discussed again below, to reduce as many funding related limitations as possible in order to increase flexibility and responsiveness and to allow the nature and scope of the work to be locally specified. Many of the funding categories under this approach would move away from service specific and be pooled for locally designated applications.

- f. *The breath and reach of engagement* (relational strategies are best implemented by **co-located teams as opposed to solitary actors**) – Within World Mission and to some extent Compassion, Peace, and Justice, there exist certain locations (China, Brasil, South Africa are possible examples) where there may only be one person or a couple/family located for a vast territory. If these are geographically important or context relevant **localities** within the larger country context, there may need to be increased concentration of human resources. To expect one person or one couple to effectively serve as convenors, facilitators, network weavers, dialogue managers, and more while supporting structural change and systemic transformation and also working to build and support vital congregations is not a realistic expectation or commitment to communities. This will require the very difficult decisions associated with repositioning of current field personnel to form teams. There will need to be criteria established to determine which are the first locations for teams, the composition and size of the team and the basis for placement (invitation only? currently existing networks of action? co-location with a partner organization? Or some other factors.)
- g. **Internal relational challenge:** *Clarify and align the overlapping functions between MES and Co-workers* with regard to sharing stories and developing resources. This is needed to avoid conflict when mission co-workers share their stories with local congregations, potential individual donors and other parts of the Church and even with potential civil society donors outside the church (i.e. foundations).

Within the PMA relationality is being transformed by the possibility of co-locating Locally Situated Action Teams (LSATs) with Synods, presbyteries, mid-councils, or a regional network of congregations that is achieving congregational vitality by being engaged in actions seeking collective impact on two or more of the priority foci (systemic poverty, structural racism, militarism, climate crisis)

External – A LSAT can be connected to and/seconded within national (or international) agencies with whom Pc(usa) is partnering.

An excellent model to consider in implementing relational strategies with a focus on asset based systemic and structural transformation is [Community Renewal International](#) (CRI) this

and similar models are described in the Current (Fall 2021) edition of the [Stanford Social Innovation Review](#). An approach to discernment in advance of action could be modeled on the investigation and discernment practices of the Church of the Savior.

## Resources

**The Challenges:** "The Agency currently funds its programs and ministries with moneys that are often restricted by the designs of donors, mission networks and/or OGA. This system hinders the Agency's autonomy and ability to allot resources that will carry out its vision and mission. It also prohibits the kind of fluid, relational responses imagined by LIT." CSC offers the following recommendations to address these limitations:

- a. *Designated funds* – A comprehensive legal and financial analysis should be immediately undertaken to determine which currently designated funds can be completely 'undesigned' or in the alternative, have the scope or use greatly expanded to achieve the greatest possible flexibility. CSC has been made aware outside of the LIT process that an ongoing process is underway to address this very issue. However, the designated funds issue was raised in LIT conversations and no mention (so possibly no awareness) of the other larger process was raised. In addition to currently existing designated funds, the Agency should seek to establish policies or practices that limit future fund flexibility.
- b. *Systemic vs. programmatic allocation*. To move away from siloed work and to enhance relationality, funds should be made available to Locally Situated Action Teams in two phases: First to support convening listening and exploration. These early funds must be very agile in their application to allow for the organic listening and partnering process to take place. The Second and subsequent phases of funding (and human resourcing) are based on the locally devised agenda and a determination made about where and how the LSAT will come alongside the local community. Long term presence is not always the same as long term placement. Systems and structural change often require decades-long commitments and yet there is not a requirement that PMA/LSAT personnel are required to have long term placements. Convening, establishing action agendas, and connecting local congregational resources often requires a few years but short term (2-4 years) placements could become the norm for activities such as technology transfer and community capacity building. Some community engagement best practices involve longer term placements. Community self-determination should also be a guiding value.
- c. *Mission co-worker compensation* – Compensation for long term missional placements mostly outside of the US has as one result a well-established and often-mentioned inequity between the co-workers and the local residents. If mutuality is a desired relational quality and essential value of the Agency going forward, then MCW compensation packages should more closely align with their local economies. The balancing can begin to occur when all non-US placements are re-established in the team models based on the placement criteria to be established. There is also a need

to establish a norm that does not default to long-term or multigenerational placements. Rather, LSA Teams, should develop short (2-3) and medium range (5-7 year) strategies that identify the local resources, utilize or cultivate local capacities for action, and then establish resourcing (i.e. funding strategies that allow for a gradual withdrawal of permanently located personnel while maintaining supportive relationships including providing 'just-in-time' training and connecting locals to congregations, presbyteries, networks, and synods that commit to maintaining long-term relationships and investments.

- d. As an agency committed to **repair**, there are specific areas where repair is called for.
- **Indigenous Communities** – A cross disciplinary internal team should be established and tasked with coordinating an extensive 12-18 month convening, listening process among the communities where the Presbyterian Church in its previous (pre-split) iterations either funded or operated boarding schools and establish a strategy to begin the repair processes based on the community design. A comprehensive funding strategy – dedicated to repair but otherwise fluid and malleable- should be developed at the same time.
  - **African Americans** – Certain Presbyterian seminaries have begun independent actions and approaches to provide reparations in recognition of their institutional involvement in the enslavement of Africans in the US. A team similarly constructed to the Indigenous communities repair team, should be tasked with a listening and convening process to determine whether there are (or could be developed) innovative and meaningful approaches to repair. This might also initiate a denomination wide effort to inspire repair both throughout the congregations and units of the church but also to inspire a movement towards reparations in every community where PC(USA) congregations are located.
  - There is also a need to identify and address any previously unaddressed historical harms left among **Latina/o communities** and various **Asian American Pacific Islander communities**. While these were not specifically mentioned during the LIT process, these are nonetheless important for focus and consideration.
- e. **Personnel development** -- In the early stages of transformation substantial resources should be applied to infusing skills and mindset among those employed by and operating in partnership with the Agency. In addition to substantial additional investments in anti-racist and decolonial thought and practice, personnel will need to be trained towards systems change and network building practices as well as content knowledge.
- f. **Reimagine the grant-making process, the role of Mission Networks, and use of designated funds that cannot be otherwise undesignated.** All of these financial models contribute to the expressed sense of coloniality, hierarchy, and lack of mutuality with the Global partners. Also, these approaches to fund development

limit the ability of the PMA in general and Global engagement programs (both CPJ and WM) specifically to be flexible, responsive and in integrity with the desired values propositions.

## **Structure**

**Challenge:** The proposed structure for the transformed PMA is not something that can be accomplished by a single set of decisions, but, with attention and intention, should be able to be accomplished over the course of 30- 42 months (at the outside). There will be anxiety and possibly resistance. During the transitional period, increased communications, constant reference to the goals and values for decision making, and heightened attention to the identity, vision, and mission will be useful to address anxieties. If people know where they are going and why decisions and being made, they can be less anxious .

**Recommendations:** The proposed structural changes are to be established as expeditiously as possible with constant consideration for the impact on employees, the wider church and partners. During the period of transition, there should be a commitment to preparing All PMA employees for the transition by:

- a. reorienting conversations and building knowledge and skills for systems thinking;
- b. developing deep understandings of structural racism and systemic poverty,
- c. building relational practice skill sets such as asset-based engagement, network analysis and weaving, facilitation, convening and managing courageous and difficult conversations, etc.;
- d. and identifying criteria to determine local or regional contexts where the Locally Situated Action Teams will be placed.
- e. During the transition period, it will also be important to reconstitute job descriptions and recalibrate the skills and qualities needed for all new hires.

At the next plateau of transformation (which assumes some tinkering and continued adaptation to new learning and contexts) the following structure is proposed for the organization of the Agency:

**Recommendation for structure of Louisville Offices** – The following units of the Agency would be located at the Louisville Location ( in an effort to continue the process of decentering, there may be some intentional conversation about no longer casting Louisville as headquarters or the central office):

1. **Executive Director's Office** – May include a Deputy Director, even with a flatter organization, someone needs to manage the Mentors;
2. **Fund and Resource Development office** – Which involves many of the current functions of the Mission Engagement and Support team and also coordinates development of resources to support local congregations (especially those that are not connected to and LSAT) in their efforts to live into the Matthew 25 function. This creates a sense of mutuality and shared benefit between

resource acquisition and resource development;

3. **Communications**

4. **Office of Innovation, Futuring, and Discernment** – This newly established office is the small unit that is responsible for:

- a. understanding futures trends and values shifts (continual STEEP analysis);
- b. searching out and being continuously aware of new and exciting models of community engagement and structural transformation that can enhance the LSAT's. This will also likely involve continuous convenings among the church and partners to discover, refine for contexts, and disseminate; and possibly be led by a new position and/or team:

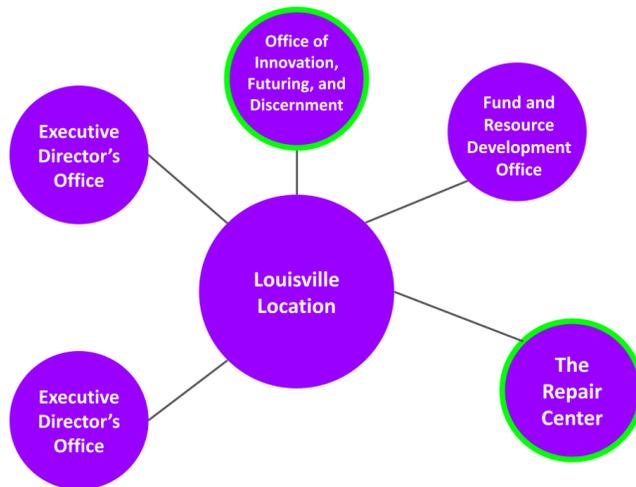
i. **Director(s) of Discernment**

- *Role:* to help the Agency align with its vision and mission and values.
- *Function:* to lead discernment circles who pray and ponder and make recommendations about what should go, what should stay, and what new initiatives are next.

5. **The Repair Center** – This newly established office in its inception will be charged with conducting the national listening/convening process for developing repair (i. e. reparations) strategies for Indigenous Communities, African American Communities, Asian American Pacific Islanders Communities, and Latino/a Communities;

6. **There will be a remnant of subject matter expertise.** These employees will continue to deepen understanding and provide resources and 'expertise' in the areas of structural racism, systemic poverty, theological formation, climate change, ending militarism, and connecting local, national and global advocacy; **and**

7. **All other PMA staff that primarily engage as liaison with the units of the ASG (HR, Payroll, IT, Risk Management, Legal, Etc.).**



**Figure 13 - What Stays in Louisville**

**Recommendation for Decentralizing PMA – moving the agency to join the margins** - The vast majority of other Agency staff (with other functions than those specifically named above for Louisville/HQ) will be positioned in one of two different forms of Locally Situated Action Teams (LSAT). Even though there might be an extended presence of the PMA in certain localities, the personnel makeup of these teams is not imagined to be permanent. Rather, people will be positioned on a team or related to a team for a specific purpose such as to provide the requested training, skill development, knowledge transfer/expertise at the request of the local partners.

1. **LSAT Type 1**- This type of locally situated action team (ideally 3 rarely more than 5 members) will be placed at the request of and cooperate with a local network to support the work of **structural transformation** in that region. The team members will have a cross functional skill set in convening, asset/network mapping and activation, difficult conversations; engaging congregations in structural change work, etc. Based on a set of criteria to be established, the Agency could put out a call to identify the first several locations (to develop and refine the model). This model is being implemented in both the US and in all other geographies. In the US it moves the agency closer to the communities they are engaged with, ecumenical partners and other parts of the Church. In non-US placements, the team approach mitigates “saviorism” and addresses the deep sense of isolation expressed by many. Non-US placements will have the same short to medium term placement practice and the members will also serve as convenors and community animators. If there are any forms of technical expertise that are needed, especially in the non-US realm, it becomes incumbent upon the team members to identify local assets or develop a plan for technology and knowledge transfer that does not require lifetime appointment.
2. **LSAT Type 2** – The second type of LSAT is one that is designed to enhance the local and regional **advocacy capacities** and serve as a connector between inter/national advocacy groups that are addressing the priority issues (racism, poverty, militarism,

climate crisis) In this instance 3-4 PMA team members will be seconded to one of the national advocacy partners (Poor People’s Campaign, Bread for the World, CARE international, as possible examples not suggestions). In addition to supporting the partner organization’s work, the LSAT looks for ways to activate the involvement of the local networks of congregations, presbyteries and synods (inspire, equip, connect) to multiply the partner organization’s impacts.

Both LSAT models sh/c/would be open to benefitting from the presence of ministry partners from outside the US as well as being YAV placements. As an example, If an LSAT was established in the South Side Chicago or somewhere else that had significant experiences with both street organizations and police violence, it would be good to recruit a ministry co-worker from South Sudan or Kenya or Jamaica, or elsewhere where there is experience reclaiming child soldiers and countering state sponsored violence. This supports cross-cultural wisdom sharing (a salient hope of LIT) and facilitates a deeper understanding of the global connections within structural and institutional domination.

Each LSAT would probably also develop a capacity to serve as a **Translator(s) for Churches** (new/repurposed role).

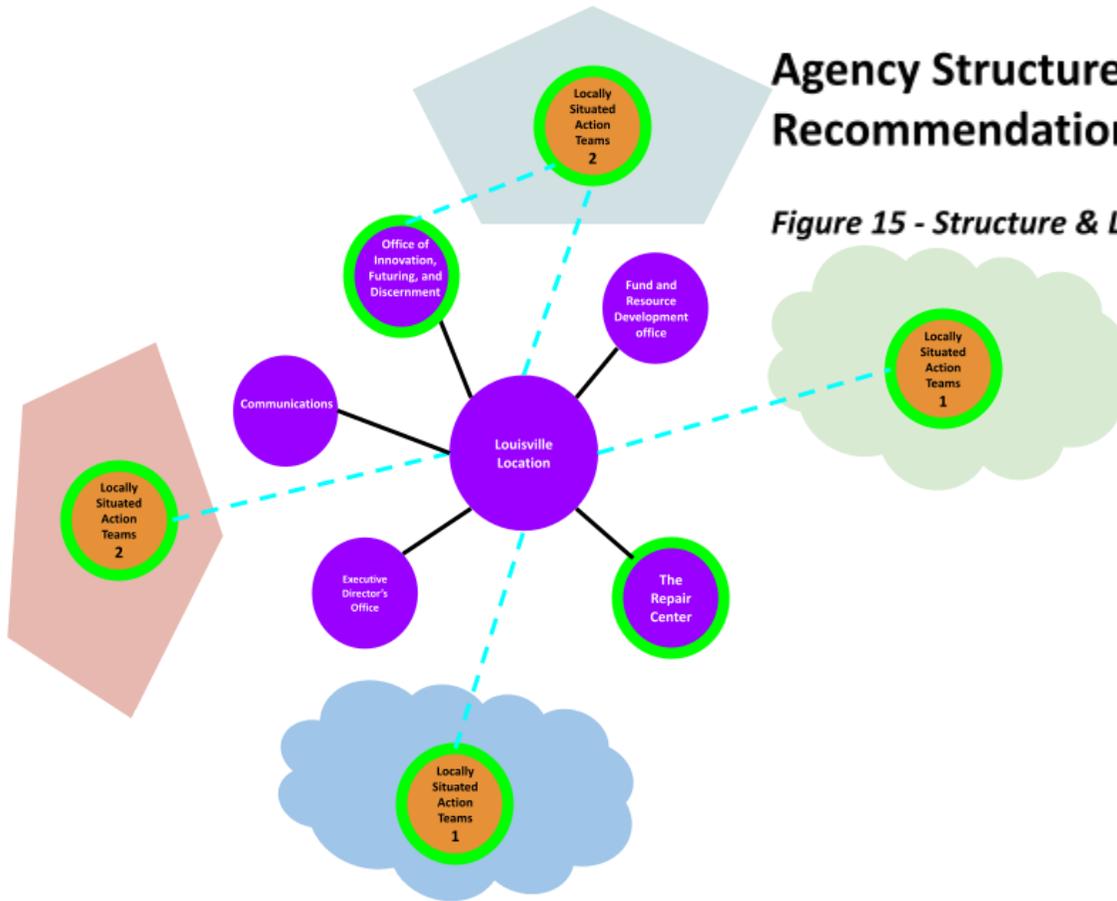
- *Role:* To help PMA staff interface and spread the love constructively with congregations, mid-councils, et al. Also, to craft dazzling materials that form and inform in invitational ways. Finally, to be ready with materials and facilitators of courageous conversations about the new ways of PMA.
- *Context:* There will be a polarized tendency to resist in some persons and congregations. This will require translation and presentation of the vision in ways that honor audiences who are not yet on board. PMA should get out ahead of this issue and think constructively early about how to communicate the vision and invite PC(USA) people into God’s brilliant future. Choose a patient, diplomatic, passionate emissary.



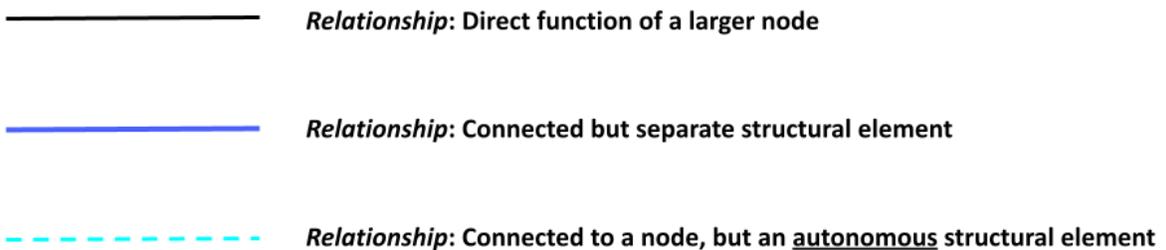
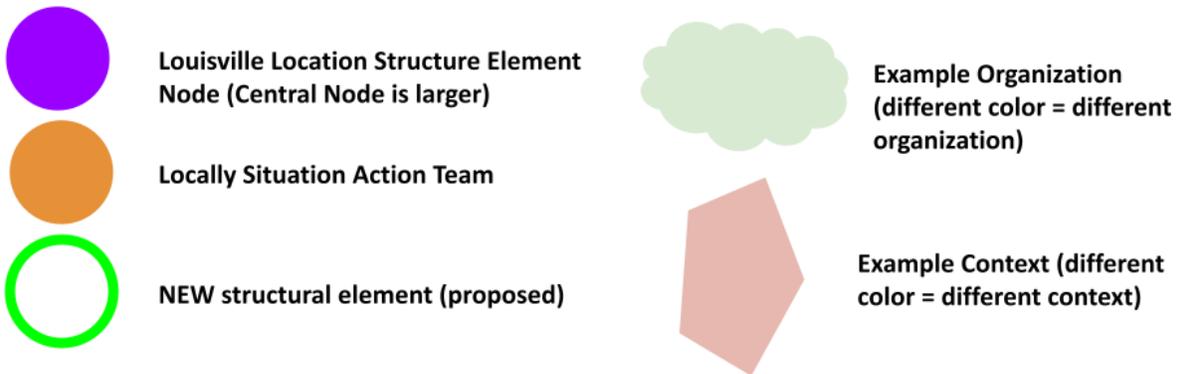
*Figure 14 - Locally Situated Action Team*

# Agency Structure Recommendation

Figure 15 - Structure & Legend



## LEGEND



## ***Testimonial Authority***

### **Form follows function and then function follows form**

**The Challenge:** As the Mission Agency seeks to listen to and be guided by voices from the margins and to develop its work plans based on the concerns articulated, it will be essential to develop structures that support this intention – In addition to having the LSATs that will be in close proximity to and listening to people who are being marginalized, some person or team of persons should be tasked to staff and convene a set of ongoing conversations with those with whom the Agency plan to be engaged. The primary point of disruption will be the reaction from those who are accustomed to having their voices, perspectives, and desires prioritized. Shifting testimonial authority is often experienced as a shift in status, which, for many, can be quite disorienting.

**Recommendations:** Establish a set of advisory councils (the labels “advisory” or “council” or “commission” should be chosen with regard for the larger church structures which give certain authority and responsibilities to units with certain names) to create ongoing mechanisms for listening for present and emerging concerns within communities for whom full voice has not previously existed. The following are three **examples** ( but not an exhaustive list) of possible advisory councils that could help inform the Agency’s deliberations and define future work:

- 1. *Non-US advisory council (possibly with regional sub-councils)***
- 2. *US council – with primary early focus being on reparations (indigenous, African American, Asian American/Pacific Islanders, and Puerto Rico) and on truth, justice, and reconciliation and possible ways to engage that work; and***
- 3. *Ecumenical/ civil society partners’ council.***

The first two councils should strive to have people who are actually living the experience and not representatives or locally placed ministry workers with US origins or the heads of representative agencies. If the councils are composed of agency heads and upper echelon officials, there should be attention paid to conducting listening sessions and accessing other information sources, local and community-specific news and trusted social media outlets to get as close to the communities of concern as possible. (“Nothing about us without us” should become a well-worn, oft-spoken mantra within the agency).

## ***Recommendations for Transformational Leadership***

In addition to the specific application of values to the way the Agency builds relationships, allots resources, structures itself, and grants testimonial authority, there remain important attitudes and actions that will help the Agency manage and maximize transformation during the rebuilding process. These are listed and described below.

**Organizational Integrity.** Realize that asking international employees or mid-councils or congregations to embody values and ways of being that are not present in Louisville/Agency leadership is hypocritical and ineffective. **The solution starts “at home.”**

**Listening Ears.** A part of embodying equity and mutualism “at home” is to **develop structures that help leaders honor and humbly listen** to the experiences and insights of both global partners and international employees in an ongoing way.

**Collaboration to Redefine Advocacy.** To support the Agency’s goal to eradicate structural inequities, it is necessary for PMA to **leverage their resources, relationships, and position of influence** to advocate for local and national policies and practices that advance justice in alignment with the requests and needs of Global and U.S. local partners.

**Making Hard Decisions.** In order to become intentional about bringing equitable and mutual ministry powerfully to the international settings, Agency leaders should **ruthlessly review existing programs with the shape and significance of their impact in mind.** The evolution of international programs over time – sometimes based on donor dollars or “we’ve always done this” rationales, rather than a guiding PMA vision – has the residual effects of siphoning energy and continuing to support ineffective or relatively insignificant ministries.

**Priorities.** *Review all leadership-level patterns and practices with a primary focus on the values of equity and mutualism.* This process may be carried out through performance reviews, but it will be even more effective if the structures that produce specific ways of leading become a primary consideration.

**Innovation.** Find specific ways to **encourage and even reward creative and innovative work in all levels of employees.** Many employees spoke of a systemic pattern of squelching of innovation and creativity in favor of traditional practices or leaders’ resistance to change. Again, this resistance should be understood as a cultural problem and largely not the product of individual personalities.

**Vision Permeation.** Through all means available, continue to **forefront images of an equitable and mutual future** in the Agency. This redundancy and cultural pervasiveness of the vision will keep eyes on the prize of racial and economic justice, both internally and in the ministries of PMA.

**HR Criteria.** In the personnel decisions that will inevitably follow the visioning process, be **painstakingly aligned with the vision** so employees begin to trust that such decisions are not arbitrary, punitive, or otherwise unrelated to the future embodiment of equity, mutuality, and justice.

## Section VI - First Steps

To initiate the transformation process, while the ground must be laid for certain actions, there are five (5) immediate first actions that the PMA EDO can implement to signal the continuing commitment to the transformation process and to begin to infuse the language and intention of the transformed PMA throughout the Agency's culture:

**Act 1 - Clarify which are the 5-7 essential values and how the values will manifest within the organization.** In section IV, a set of values, essential and important, were named as a result of the Listening Session and Leadership Innovation Team Processes. Simply listing the values to the current team members will not result in their infusion into organizational culture. The values lists should be disseminated to all PMA team members and then a series of several small group (15 people) conversations should be held to allow team members to describe how they would hope to see each of these values manifesting within the organizational culture. These conversations are important for establishing ownership of the transformation process. In addition to identifying what others should do to demonstrate the values, each team member should be asked to identify the ways they will manifest the values in their day to day working relationships.

**Act 2 - Continue the work of understanding financial, legal, operational, ecclesial possibilities to either undesignate or broaden the scope of currently designated program funds.** Determining the required process and time frame for creating the desired flexibility of funds will also establish the timeline for determining the contexts in which the first LSAT's will operate and locating the first personnel.

**Act 3 - Create a multidisciplinary cross-program team to begin establishing the LSAT location criteria** that will be applied when identifying the contexts for placement of LSATs. (Ultimately, these teams will be placed by invitation of the leaders in the location. What are the other conditions? Existence of an active network focusing on racism, poverty, militarism? local ecclesial leadership? specific challenges (crime, poverty, police community conflicts)? Other criteria such as presence or absence of other actors, potential for local resources, etc. will all need to be clarified. These criteria will become essential as the PMA communicates these operational shifts to the larger church and communities AND as requests for invitations are initiated.

Because the criteria are not likely to be exactly the same for US and non-US placements, a set of criteria should also be established for location of LSATs outside of the United States. Until these criteria are established and locations for a first set of non-US placements are determined, it would probably be prudent to announce that some non-US based mission co-workers who were evacuated to the US for COVID protocols, will only return to their previous placements specifically to wrap up and (at least temporarily) wind down any existing projects.

**Act 4 - Establish an extensive professional development agenda** to indicate that, beyond any program-specific expertise, the future of the PMA will be grounded in antiracist, decolonial, relational practices. Skills and mindsets including systems thinking, antiracism, decoloniality, understanding alternatives to market neoliberal capitalism, network and asset mapping and weaving, convening and facilitating difficult conversations, other models of listening, convening and organizing, should be widely introduced.

**Act 5 - Establish a multidisciplinary, multiracial team of process ambassadors** that can begin to share the process, outcomes, and future of the Agency with the broader church. Special attention should be given to engaging with people and groups who may not be fully aligned with the liberatory, reparative, radically inclusive commitments of the transformed PMA.

# Conclusion

**Transformation is possible;** in fact, transformation is in sight. The transformation of the PMA will require careful attention to the Agency culture. Culture can be transformed by small and large changes to the prevailing relationships, resources, structures, and testimonial authority. This report includes several recommendations in these four pillars of the culture. As important as the relational, resources, structural, and testimonial authority changes are the values shifts.

**Grace should abound.** Love and mutual regard should be present in every decision; a view towards justice in the “out there world “ and more so between and among the members of the team should undergird every action. Transformation will likely be trauma producing for many who have identities totally invested in their programmatic roles AND that among those in managerial roles who are being invited to shift to mentoring relationally guided patterns.

**Transformation with community in mind.** In the same manner that development and transformation of communities seeking to dismantle structural racism and eradicate systemic poverty has to take place at the ‘pace of the community,’ the internal organizational transformation should take place at the pace of the team. The people aren’t the problem, the problem is the problem. When seeking to orient all internal relationships toward a new narrative, there will be many instances where people seem to ‘not get it.’ They are just reverting to old habits, habits formed in relationship to the old narrative. Similarly, the urge to move the people out and find people who do get it, might also be reverting to an older narrative. Patience, a commitment to relational leadership, forgiveness and grace, with a constant insistence on the announced transformation is what will be called for in this moment.

**Begin with the end in mind.** As a constant reminder of the intention of the transformation process: In the Gospel of Matthew, in the 25th chapter, as throughout, Jesus encourages all who would listen to meet the people at their point of need, to extend to them grace, and co-labor with them to build an equitable and hospitable world. This is an understanding of the work that is now required in the rebuilding phase.

**Be blessed in every way as you proceed.**