

Summary of Responses from Agency Leaders to Questions

1. What are the guiding values of the agency that you represent?

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC)

- PPC mission is to provide resources in a variety of area for pastors, teachers, congregations, students and for general readers.

Presbytery Mission Agency (PMA)

- 7 core values – Mindfulness of justice and peace, Diversity and inclusiveness, Creativity, Collaboration. Transparency. Impact and Faithful Stewardship.
- God calls us to act boldly and compassionately
- To be a kingdom building, boundary breaking agency
- Mission cannot be addressed by one body alone

Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (PILP)

- To do our work with integrity, transparency, equality and compassion

Office of General Assembly (OGA)

- Equipping, empowering, and collaborating with our mid councils
- Telling stories
- In vesting in relationships
- Gathering bodies to discern together God's will

A Corp

- Service, prudence, neutrality, and transparency

2. What does Connectionalism mean to your agency?

Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC)

- Connecting with local congregations to provide resources
- Hear their needs and provide one stop shopping for those needs.

PMA

- As the body of Christ each part is present to enhance the overall work of the church, and each part of the body is vitally connected to the other part. We do not stand alone and we are accountable to each other

- PC(USA) is one church

PILP

- Working together to improve what we can do for our denomination, for our churches, and for our members
- Though we are diverse we are all part of one body

OGA

- It means accountability, shared responsibility and partnership

Board of Pensions (BOP)

- We are part of a larger system

Presbyterian Foundation (PF)

- Connecting through regular and special projects related to the disbursement of funds

A Corp

- We work daily with all agencies so connectionalism is a key part of how our work is done.

3. Does the work of the General Assembly affect the work of your agency? If so, in what way?

PPC

- Does not impact directly but indirectly through policies, resources need.
- Broad mandates are difficult, especially if funding is not provided along with the mandate

PMA

- Receive input and guidance which we use to establish mission priorities
- They approve foundational changes in our mission

PILP

- They either recommend or require certain initiatives for us to include in our work focus

PF

- Through directives

A Corp

- Mandates and directives
- General Assembly is one of A Corp's clients for legal, financial and logistical matters.

4. What does the agency gain by the gathering of a General Assembly every two years?

PPC

- Opportunity to showcase our resources and receive feedback
- Reminded of our connection to wider church

PMA

- Discernment. Information. Guidance.
- It helps us discover what God is up to so that we might be informed and guided in mission and ministry

PILP

- Building / renewing relationships
- Increasing our visibility across the denomination
- Gaining perspective on the state of the denomination

OGA

- Discernment the mind of Christ

BOP

- Communication of the broader church
- We time major changes to coincide with GA

PF

- Sharing challenges and highlights of our work
- Insight and suggestions

A Corp

- A clear sense of priorities

5. How is the agency hindered by the gathering of a General Assembly every two years?

PPC

- Financial Cost and strain on resources

PMA

- Short term reaction cycles
- Difficult to sustain long term projects in an assembly that is inclined to focus on urgent
- Allure of something new weighs upon agencies who seek to bring new inspiration
- We must think carefully about the assembly's ability to lead the connectional church when it takes great initiative to implement initiatives across the whole church. Typically, it takes more than 2 years to do so
- We need to keep our eyes focused on long-term change

PILP

- Preparation and cost
- An initiative may come out that is perhaps well intended, but lacks depth of consideration of how it might be carried out

OGA

- It is not a hindrance, it is vital to the life of the church

PF

- Preparations are highly work intensive for staff
- Cost of preparations could be spent toward other endeavors

A Corp

- Limited time to successfully complete work.
- Mandates without adequate provisions for funding

6. How does your agency increase or serve to increase the connection of the denomination as a whole?

PPC

- Creating the opportunity to connect all churches through uniform resources

PMA

- Articulate and promote the vision for mission designed to unite all Presbyterians

- Providing resources to develop and strength mission partnerships among agencies and throughout the church
- Deployed staff who are out in the field working with mid-councils
- We are open to sharing our knowledge and expertise and being an active convener of those with mission interests across the denomination
- National gatherings such as MCLG and Big Tent

PILP

- We lean toward sponsoring events that bring people together

OGA

- Bringing people together to discern the mind of Christ in new ways through gatherings of mid council leaders.
- Bringing consistency across congregations and mid councils

PF

- Our services are available to all agencies

A Corp

- A connector between church entities

7 & 8 How do you collaborate or do these things in concert with other agencies? What more could you be doing to collaborate or support the work of OGA?

PPC

- Partner through publishing Book of Order and Book of Confessions
- Assist some agencies in publishing of resources

PMA

- As agencies live out their callings we are inevitably drawn closer together and our work finds new areas of commonality
- We collaborate in the presenting of many events such as Big Tent, Mid Council leaders Network, Mid Council Financial Officers Network, Ecumenical gathers and more.
- We are heavily dependent on the work of OGA and seek collaboration at every possible point
- We seek to be good partners and remain open to further collaboration

PILP

- We seek out opportunities to be involved with other agencies

BOP

- Data collection and analysis

PF

- We maintain open collegial relationships with all other agencies, staff members and boards
- The General Assembly could, at their discretion, distribute those funds differently and in different proportions to other agencies or mid councils.

A Corp

- Collaboration happens on a daily basis as part of our function

9. How can your work assist in funding the work of the church?

PPC

- We fund ourselves – PPC

PMA

- Presbyterians resist funding infrastructures and polity, but they will fund mission –
- Tell more stories that connect Presbyterians to mission. Without these stories of mission, funding the work of the church feels more like dues that they must pay, rather than a joyous opportunity to join what God is doing in the world
- Mission interpretation is key and must be carried out prayerfully and strategically

OGA

- Our funding system is built on trust, the best thing OGA can do is to continue to build trust across the church

BOP

- Cost savings. Board of Pensions has saved congregations \$3 million a year due to plan changes

PF

- The foundation provides regular funding for over 7000 per fund ministries and other 3000 charitable causes and beneficiaries. The Ministry Relations Officers regularly work with church entities to assist in many different ways in funding the work of the church.

A Corp

- Provides financial information and analysis to decision makers

10. How do you relate to mid councils?

PPC

- Provide bookstores at gatherings such as MCLG and Moderators Conference
- As valued partners on the front lines resourcing congregations

PMA

- Mid Councils are valued partners
- We place a great importance on coordinating our work with mid council leaders building trusted relationships with them
- Several mid council leaders serve on our board
- Collaborated with several mid councils during budget discussions

PILP

- Expanded sponsorships of events and gatherings

OGA

- Relationships through staff engagement with mid councils

BOP

- By working closely with mid councils, especially through direct support
- Through 10 field staff members

PF

- Provides 10 field staff deployed around the denomination.

A Corp

- Does not have direct formal connection with Mid Councils

11. What are you doing to assist mid councils?

PPC

- Providing resources and training to assist in leader training on the local level
- Facilitate the POINT (Presbyterians Organized in Nurture and Training)

PMA

- Providing mission focus, undergirded by the General Assembly's mandate to become a Matthew 25 church.
- By presenting a common mission focus we can all be drawn closer and become healthier
- Providing grants and funding for the work of mid councils
- Providing ways to extend ourselves beyond the capacity of any one mid council

PILP

- We truly consider mid councils as partners in our mission

OGA

- Training, advice and support

BOP

- Through creative solutions

PF

- Stewardship education
- Regularly recognizing the incredibly hard and often unsung work of our mid council

A Corp

- Pointing to resources and best practices

12. What more could you be doing to assist mid councils?

PPC

- Perhaps webinars to explore additional resources

PMA

- We are responsive to every request for collaboration with mid councils
- We wish there were more opportunities for conversation regarding extensive collaboration

PILP

- Finding additional services we could provide

OGA

- There are nearly endless ways OGA can support mid councils, though limited resources prevent us from exploring all of them

PF

- We are constantly seeking new ways to assist

A Corp

- Through ASG staff who respond to requests from Mid councils.

13. How could your agency assist in developing and expanding any funding model?

PPC

- Unsure, but open to suggestions

PMA

- Our staff is one third the size that it was 25 years which has provided challenges. Last 4 to 5 years we believe we have found equilibrium.
- Presbyterians will not give simply because they are supposed to give
- Presbyterians support mission they believe is transforming society
- Ask – many Presbyterians will not give unless they are asked
- Provide transparency
- For three years the Mission Engagement Advisor team and Special Offerings group have provided mission interpretation and solicitation for Shared Mission, Special Offerings, and Per Capita. This has stabilized giving and even increased in certain areas.
- Provide an expanded direct experience as an integral part of developing or expanding a funding model.
- Building trust and strengthening relationships will play a critical role in any funding model

OGA

- Fee for service, though it's not been our tradition.

BOP

- OGA is dependent on Presbyteries acting as intermediary for communications, collections and payments of per capita.
- Change the indirect system which is associated with blurred communications
- Expecting a percentage of each congregation's receipts is fairer and more consistent

PF

- The foundation's services are available to all agencies.

A Corp

- Could provide services to help develop and expand funding models.

14. If you could change the funding system, or start with a brand-new system, what would you value?

PPC

- A lack of competition between agencies for resources
- A clearer mechanism for developing budget priorities
- Shared understanding of each agency's mission
- Reduction in overlapping activities between agencies

PMA

- Simplicity, which includes a reduction in "asks" from different agencies
- Re-emphasize support of the whole connection system
- No longer encourage stewardship based on giving a portion of one's income
- Streamline funding streams to minimize confusion of church members

PILP

- Shared value with shared cost
- Fairness and balance
- Good stewardship
- Keeping connectional cornerstone at in place

OGA

- Equity as a guiding principle
- Fairness. Transparency. Aligned governance with missional priority.

BOP

- Nimbleness to change course within broad parameters between General Assemblies.

PF

- Beyond our fiduciary duty to disperse funds for their intended purpose, the foundation does not advocate any particular disbursement pattern or recipients.

A Corp

- Would value a funding system that decreased the complexity of funds management and were different elements of the PCUSA were not in competition with each other because of the funding method.

15. If you could change the funding system, or start with a brand-new funding system, what would it look like? How would do that?

PMA

- First confirm if current funding system is broken
- PMA staff discovered in 2005-06 that funding system was not broken enough to generate the energy to overcome inertia. It was also difficult to risk the loss of \$15 million funding stream for something unproven.
- If we could all agree that the current system is broken, even the portion that most benefits one's own interests, we might be able to design a new comprehensive system that would work for everyone
- The driving force behind the system would have to be simplicity of giving to one basic giving system that encouraged unrestricted giving

PILP

- Per capita makes sense for a connectional church, but important to look for additional revenue streams
- Important that decisions be made in light of the needs of the whole church and not just the needs of the organization or area that has the authority to make the decision

OGA

- First determine critical functions at each level of council of the church and determine the resources necessary to sustain those functions.

BOP

- PMA, OGA, A Corp should plan for revenue and expenses together and a single board is ultimately the best way to integrate finances and programmatic priorities.
- Using mid councils as revenue collection and payment agents seems problematic as there will always exist the tension between the two.
- A centralized collection based on percentage of revenue rather than per capita. Formulaic amounts would need to flow to the mid councils from central instead of the other way around.

A Corp

- Does not a view on what such as system should be.