

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MISSION COUNCIL (GAMC) – Spring 2010

The 2010 spring meeting of the GAMC was held in Louisville from May 12-14. It was a time of meeting new people on the team...the Rev. Roger Dermody, who will serve as the Deputy Executive Director for Mission, and the Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson II, who is the new Director of Public Witness for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office, and saying good-bye to many who have served for varying periods of time. It is always bittersweet when it becomes necessary to make staffing reductions regardless of whether the cause is an intentional changing of direction or is due to financial challenges. Ten months ago, it became apparent that spending would need to be reduced by 12.2% in 2011 and an additional 2% in 2012. In total, 73.5 positions were eliminated. Twelve positions were vacant, twelve people accepted voluntary separation, and fifteen incumbents were offered new positions in the revamped structure. The cuts were made across the entire organization – 24.5 in Mission, 11.5 in Shared Services, 8 in Communications and Funds Development and 5 in the Executive Director’s office. The staff was reduced by 13% to 340. The revised budget for 2010 is \$93,841,273, for 2011 is \$82,097,234 and for 2012 is \$80,550,613. These budgets will be sent for adoption to the 219th General Assembly meeting in Minneapolis from July 3rd-10th.

There are five new strategic directions that will guide the reorganization as the GAMC moves from doing mission on the church’s behalf to inspiring, equipping and connecting the church for mission and ministry. A variety of research methods were utilized to ascertain what the denomination and its leaders felt was the most important mission activity that it was seeking. A wide variety of programs and ministries were equally valued and it became clear that since what the GAMC does could not be prioritized and the focus could not be narrowed, it would be necessary to change how the work is done. The guiding directions are:

- The GAMC role is to inspire, equip and connect – to “broker, connect and facilitate” mission among Presbyterians rather than initiate mission programs;
- It will engage in communities of mission practice – focusing on “multi-party” partnerships to advance mission;
- It will focus on the health of congregations and other communities of faith – focusing time and effort “to bring the most impact to the health and vibrancy of the local congregation”;
- It will focus on leadership development – helping all church leaders develop “core competencies”;
- It will embrace a global perspective – focusing on “global discipleship with local, national, and international components” and “working to reduce distance between the different spaces of mission.”

In addition to the revised strategic direction the GAMC is working under several guiding principles. Executive Director Linda Valentine said that “the combinations of these two factors will allow the organization to focus on the whole church, fiscal sustainability, avoiding duplication, “sunset rules” and regular evaluation of all programs, focus on ministries that can only be done at the national level – enabling GAMC staff and elected members to plan a hopeful future in a world where new giving patterns lead to decline of

traditional funding sources and where new demands compete with established programs...”

Every ministry area will be affected by the reorganization that is taking place. Some of these changes are:

- Congregational Ministries Publishing will seek to become financially self-supporting in its English language curriculum and educational resources in 2011. The GAMC will continue to support the net cost of Korean, Spanish, Portuguese, and Braille curriculum.
- Mission Resources (*Mission Yearbook for Prayer and Study*, *Presbyterians Today* magazine and the Planning Calendar) will be reorganized within Communications and Funds Development. Sadly, the *Children's Mission Yearbook* will be discontinued.
- World Mission will be changed to focus on “communities of mission practice” that include staff, mission networks and other mission organizations and the PC(USA)’s global partners engaging only in places where global partners and mission “constituents” both have an interest in working with World Mission. No mission workers are being recalled and the GAMC has committed to increase support of those workers from 11% to 13% of the mission budget.
- Vocation is reducing its support for the Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel and will discontinue continuing education grants in 2012. It will reduce or end the National Presbyterian Scholarship Program and begin a new program forgiving some theological student loans for grads who agree to serve in “hard to call” congregations.
- Evangelism and Church Growth will reduce funding for Mission Program Grants and shift the focus of its Youth and Young Adult Ministries office to equipping congregations to develop those ministries locally.
- Racial Ethnic Ministries will change its direction from working directly with racial ethnic congregations to working cross-culturally in partnerships with European-American churches, middle governing bodies and others to promote PC(USA) diversity.
- Women’s Ministries will move to program and ministry development and implementation at every level of the church rather than concentrating on policy development around women’s issues.
- Shared Services will take advantage of new technology to shift and streamline accounting functions and to eliminate redundancies. Mail room and distribution warehouse service levels will be reduced.
- Some programs will be maintained but will be working in different ministry areas.

Linda Valentine concluded that, “while the changes won’t be easy, the GAMC believes that the restructuring is in the best interest of the church and will help in meeting the church’s core needs and in offering the world a visible witness of Jesus Christ”...adding “ ‘Christ calls the Church into being, giving it all that is necessary for its mission in the world’. Even in a time when it feels like it is cut, cut, cut, Christ provides all that is necessary.”