

Presbyterian Church (USA) Global Partners Roundtable

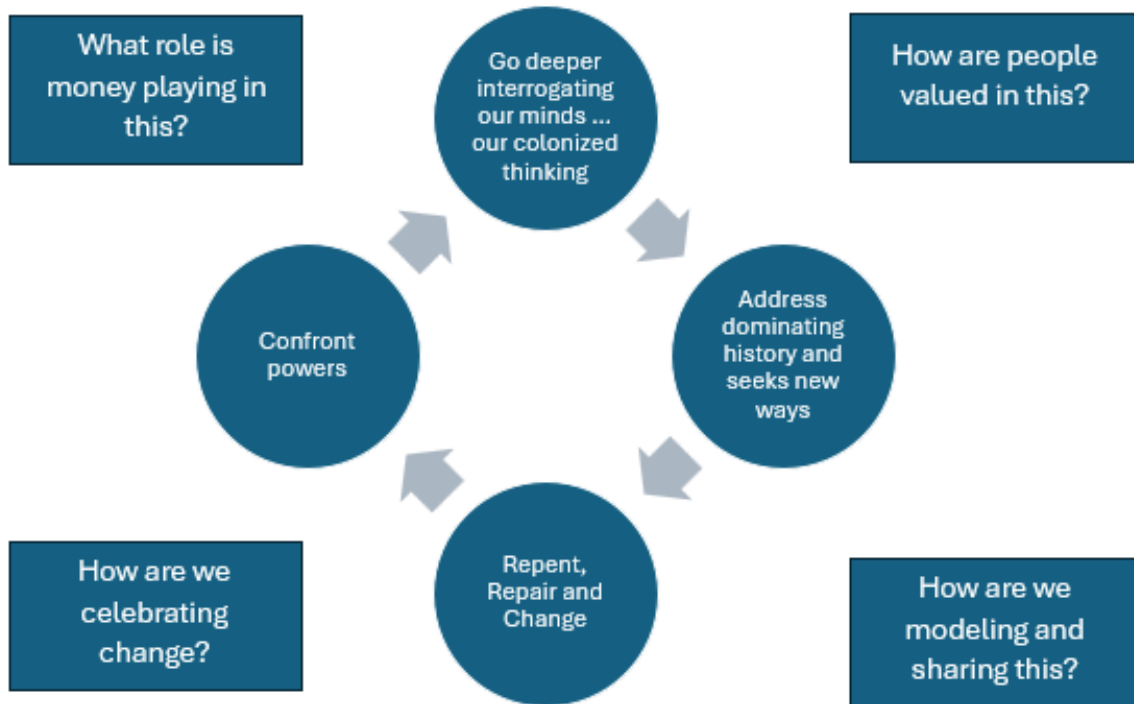
Report to PMAB and COGA

For the past year building on an initiative in the PMA Mission Workplan to organize a Global Advisory Panel a team comprising Dianna Wright, Director Ecumenical & Interreligious Relations (OGA), Amanda Craft, Manager of Advocacy, Office of Immigration Issues (OGA), Laurie Kraus, Director Humanitarian & Global Ecumenical Engagement (CPJ/PMA), Louisa Gallup, Project Associate (WM/PMA) and Philip Woods, Associate Director, Global Strategy & Program (WM/PMA) have been working with a representative group of the full range of the PC(USA)'s global partners to create a space where in the spirit of living into a decolonial vision of being the church we could meet with our global partners and explore together how the PC(USA) could most effectively show up in the world today.

Following an initial, externally facilitated consultation in Kuala Lumpur in March 2023, a proposal for a PC(USA) Global Partners Roundtable was created and a small group of global partners elected to bring it into being. In March 2024, in Buenos Aires, Argentina at the invitation of the Reformed Church in Argentina, we held the first full meeting of the PC(USA) Global Partners Roundtable. While attendance in-person at the meeting was not what we had expected, due to the change of government in Argentina and an unexpected change in immigration procedures causing the denial of visas to several participants, all 15 global partner members managed to connect with the meeting at least once during our time together and in various ways contribute to our deliberations. PC(USA) leadership was represented in the meeting by Kerry Rice (OGA) and Sara Lisherness (PMA), together with Denise Anderson (CPJ Director) and Mienda Uriarte (WM Director) representing the two most internationally engaged PMA ministry areas.

This first meeting had two purposes. One was gathering the table, where through introductions and getting to know each other, we could understand the breadth and depth of the community represented in the Roundtable, and the historical journeys that had brought us to this place of connection. The second was to collectively agree a framework for how we would work together. Alongside this we were introduced to the context of Argentina, specifically Buenos Aires, where local faith-based activists helpfully spoke into the work we were engaged in, exploring what it means to be a decolonial church, as they shared stories of their struggles and their visions for a society built on solidarity.

Coming out of the Kuala Lumpur meeting and subsequent work by the continuation group we had a draft terms of reference for consideration, but as we listened to each other it became clear that the work we are engaged in is a process and thus would be better represented by a process diagram, and that as global partners and the PC(USA) we have different tasks and expectations in this work. Thus, in a mix of working together and separately we arrived at the following provisional framework to guide our work. As one of the participants from the Pacific put it, when sailing the ocean, we can only navigate as far as the horizon, and as we journey the horizon shifts, as do the ocean currents and winds, and we need to navigate accordingly.



PC(USA) Text

The PC(USA) Global Partners Round Table has been established so that the PC(USA) might live into a richer, fuller expression of the kingdom* of God, *in solidarity with our partners around the world.*

In seeking to repent, repair and change, we commit to turn away from centering ourselves and our internal concerns alone, and we turn toward a renewed commitment to human rights and toward a solidarity in which we (the PCUSA) take our place as a part of the global community. We reject the premises and practices of American Imperialism and Christian Nationalism in the USA, and we will interrogate their impact in our church structures and in our church families; in our advocacy efforts; our culture; and in how we receive and treat the world church in our midst.

We commit to extending the conversations and learnings of this Global Roundtable, convened in March 2024 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, with

Global Partners Text

In confronting powers, the PCUSA will not only seek to address poverty and injustice by providing direct assistance but will actively seek to identify agents responsible for causing or promoting poverty and injustice, use their God-given powers to challenge and eliminate harmful practices and policies.

Having recognized the role played by the church in supporting colonialism the PCUSA will ensure that its members are made aware of this history and will engage in internal discussion on the matter, providing opportunities for self-examination, repentance and change.

The PCUSA will create opportunities for reflection and discussion on the mindsets and structures which promote or facilitate domination. These structures will be named and revised or removed (as appropriate), and affirmative action taken to correct the injustices which have resulted...

the systems and structures of the PCUSA, specifically:

- Our Stated Clerk and their offices
- The GACEIR
- Our advocacy efforts and witness to speaking truth to structures and powers
- Our Intercultural Congregational Support Associates
- Our advisory committees
- Our leadership and colleagues
- Our mid councils and their leaders

*The construct/vision of “kindom” was created by Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz (get description)

Convince the PCUSA to name historic and systematic injustices within the church and the States to enable these injustices to be addressed.

Create resource materials around decolonization for use within the PCUSA to educate all church members on historical injustices.

Ensure the PCUSA powers who are not here understand the need for the church to undertake the decolonization process as a whole church.

Create a process that allows the PCUSA to confront the power which continues to perpetuate colonizing processes and human rights abuse in the US and abroad.

Understand the mission as a commitment to justice. We must name and confront the powers that today from the USA are responsible for injustices in the world. How can we convert all the reflections around the Matthew 25 campaign into concrete actions to reverse the damage done by the unjust policies of the US governments in the world.

Encourage presbyteries and local communities that have twinning around the world to be attentive to situations of violation of law and injustice that occur in the US in their contexts and accompany their mission companions in the process of confrontation and restoration.

Following the ocean navigation analogy, a steering group has been elected to carry the work forward from this meeting until the next meeting in October, including bringing these statements of intent together into one, and planning the agenda and thematic focus for the meeting.

This is timely work in this season of unification, marking a new way of collaborating with our global partners and collectively shaping our global ecumenical, humanitarian and missional engagement.