

An Alternative Proposal Toward a New PCA Strategic Plan

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Posted by Wes White

The Rev. Dr. Jon D. Payne is pastor of Grace PCA in the Atlanta metro and author of *John Owen on the Lord's Supper* and *In the Splendor of Holiness: Rediscovering the Beauty of Reformed Worship*. He is also deeply committed to the Reformation2Germany project. . He offered a a stimulating comment on yesterday's post on the proposed strategic plan and he has offered an explanation of his comment. I re-post it here for those who don't read the comments.

Dr. Payne's Post:

My thoughts on a positive, strategic plan for the PCA:

Friends, the "PCA Strategic Vision" is, in large part, a strategy to reverse the downward trend of the denomination in terms of numerical growth, unity, financial support and cooperation. The framers of the vision, I believe, have the best intentions of making the PCA a stronger, healthier denomination. This effort should be commended. However, after reading the document, one cannot help but wonder if the remedy for the downward trend in the PCA is off target. Perhaps our downward trend and disunity is less due to cultural irrelevancy, missional narrowness, ethnic insensitivity and safe places for women and young people, and more a consequence of our unwillingness to give ourselves wholeheartedly to what God has promised to bless in the lives of His elect.

From my perspective, our greatest need as a denomination is to renew our commitments to the 17 points listed above, commitments which Reformed and Confessional Presbyterians have held for centuries precisely because they believed that they were biblical and would effectually cultivate growth, unity, mission, sacrificial giving and cooperation. I understand that some will say, "Yes, I agree with the 17 points, but we need to do more than this to bring renewal to the PCA." Do we? If these 17 points (not an exhaustive list, but a start) were fleshed out and made available to every presbytery/session in the PCA to implement into their philosophy of ministry, would we not enjoy the kinds of renewal that we all earnestly desire? What we need more than anything in the PCA is a warm, winsome, consistent, serious, joyful, positive expression of Reformed and confessional Presbyterianism that unashamedly and courageously applies the theology of our Confession to the way we worship, preach, teach, write, shepherd, discipline, serve, evangelize and plant-churches (Domestic and International).

From our experience at GPC, applying the Reformed Confession in this manner cultivates

unity, inspires evangelism and mission, stimulates prayer and Bible reading, fosters sacrificial giving, encourages biblical piety and warmly welcomes women, minorities and youth to worship God according to Scripture and employ their God-given gifts in service of their neighbor. This vision, I believe, would unify our beloved denomination in what God Himself has clearly promised to bless.

1. A renewed commitment to exegetical, God-centered, Christ-exalting, Holy Spirit-filled, lectio-continua preaching.
2. A renewed commitment to the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper for the spiritual nourishment, health and comfort of the elect.
3. A renewed commitment to private, family and corporate prayer.
4. A renewed commitment to – and delight in – the Lord's Day.
5. A renewed commitment to worship God according to Scripture.
6. A renewed commitment to sing the Psalms in private, family, and public worship.
7. A renewed commitment to wed our missiology to our Reformed ecclesiology.
8. A renewed commitment to Spirit-dependent, prayerful, loving, courageous evangelism.
9. A renewed commitment to biblical church discipline.
10. A renewed commitment to family worship.
11. A renewed commitment to biblical hospitality.
12. A renewed commitment to catechize our covenant children.
13. A renewed commitment to biblical masculinity and femininity.
14. A renewed commitment to shepherd the flock of God.
15. A renewed commitment to promote and defend the Reformed Confession.
16. A renewed commitment to the mortification of sin and worldliness.
17. A renewed commitment to rest by faith in Christ ALONE for salvation, without minimizing Gospel obedience.

You can read Dr. Payne's book on Reformed worship by ordering it [here](#).

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