

PMA Culture Code 1.0

2023 Vision Convocation Discussion Responses

by Question

Question #1: What's your favorite stanza of CC 1.0 and why? (p. 2-14)

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Question #3: Think of your closest team of colleagues at PMA. Which of these stanzas does that team best embody with each other? (p. 24-38)

Question #4: Think of your closest team of colleagues at PMA. Which of these stanzas do you sense this team most needs to grow in? (p. 38-49)

We...

1 listen first.

2 prioritize people and accountability.

3 communicate with consistency and honesty.

4 cultivate joy and belonging.

5 wrestle with power and privilege.

6 lead with empathy.

7 lean into teamwork and collaboration.

8 pursue positive impact.

9 innovate to engage the biggest challenges in God's world.

**Please note that comments have been digitally transcribed and only minimally edited for readability.*

Abbreviation Key:

COM—Communications

CPJ – Compassion, Peace, and Justice

EDO—Executive Director's Office

RE&WIM—Racial Equity and Women's Intercultural Ministries

TFE—Theology, Formation, and Evangelism

WM—World Mission

"PMA Colleague"—indicates those who shared without giving their name (either intentionally or unintentionally).

Question #1: What's your favorite stanza of CC 1.0 and why?

Stanza 1: We listen first.

Listening first is my favorite stanza, because I think this is what we should be modeling with each other and practicing out in the church. We should always be listening first-- to those constituents that we serve, and we need to practice listening first with one another.

- *Stephanie Fritz, TFE*

My favorite stanza is stanza one, listening first from our culture code, and it's when we walk into every conversation with the belief that the person we're talking to might have something to teach us or that we might be wrong. It becomes so much easier to listen and to really engage in that conversation, which is such a great foundation to start from. - *Chelsea DeLisser, EDO*

I live in Japan. And to listen first is culturally appropriate, but the real reason I like to listen first is because God gave us two ears and one tongue. - *David Hudson, WM*

I serve in Israel Palestine, and my favorite stanza is listen first, because if we're not listening first, then we're not hearing. And if we're not hearing, we don't know what it is that we should be acting upon and what it is that we should be doing.

-*Doug Dicks, WM*

I work with the Hunger Program and it's always my preference to listen first because of the way I process. I don't know what I'm thinking actually until I start hearing ideas from other people. - *Eileen Schumann, CPJ*

I work for the Office of Public Witness in Washington, DC and it's incumbent upon me to listen first because I am the office manager, and we have constituents calling in about legislation in front of Congress, and sometimes they're happy and sometimes they're not. - *Annette Greer, CPJ*

I'm with the Racial Equity and Women's Intercultural Ministries. My first choice was listen first -- means when you listen, means that you see the person that you're talking to. - *Princeton Abaraoha, RE&WIM*

I don't actually have a priority. I don't have a first. I think many of them are of equal importance, but I've chosen to come here because this is fundamental. Listening is fundamental to so many of the other items in the culture code. - *Jeff Boyd, WM*

I chose listen first because in listening we say to the speaker, we are present. We care about what you're saying or feeling or experiencing. - *Paula Cooper, WM*

I serve in Zambia, and I chose listen first because if we listen, we learn. Listening gives us the truth about those we are listening to. Without listening, we put ourselves and our needs first. Partnership requires listening, even if we don't agree. And listening helps us to see new perspectives. - *Melissa Johnson, WM*

I picked listen first because I think that's most important, right? In everyone that we serve, in every capacity that we engage, people want to be heard. I also make an assumption about what listen first means, which is that really, I think the intention is to understand the other that we are engaging, because listening in and of itself is not sufficient if the other party doesn't feel like they're understood, so that's my assumption. And perhaps that's something that perhaps can be clarified because I think it's important for us not just to listen so that we can say, yeah, I heard you, but to really make the other feel like we understand what it is that they're conveying to us. So that's why I selected it. – *Tamron Keith, WM*

Listening First. And I'm kind of similar to Tamron because I really believe the constituencies we serve really have the answers to ministry. And so it really behooves us to listen cause too often we have top down mentality and giving people what they really don't need. And I think listening is so valuable cause the answers are really there. And the other thing with listening, why I think it's so vital and so important is it gives us, we're talking about stories, it gives us an opportunity to hear the powerful stories that really represent the gospel. To start with relationships. We start with relationships. I think we're all saying the same thing. Listen first. – *Michael Moore, RE&WIM*

People need to be heard and they need their stories shared, initially with us, but to the broader community too, and their stories are important, and if we don't take the time to listen and just jump ahead, we failed to give them that respect that they are due and to understand what they're saying to us because there's layers of stuff in those stories and we need it all. – *Ellen Smith, WM*

Listening first, allows me to process my own awareness, because I always talk with myself and I want to make sure that what I say is right, so I have to listen for other people and examine whether this is what God wants me to do or not. And so listening is very important. Allows me to be led by God. I can think of about 10 reasons that I should be listening. - *Farsijana Adeney-Risakotta, WM*

First in this setting, I feel like so many people are smarter than me, so I want to listen to what other people say. It takes me a while to gather my thoughts, too. So it's probably better if I slow down. I think about living in Guatemala where I don't speak Spanish very well, so that I should listen first and take a while to form my thoughts. And I think about who I represent as a white man too. And it's time for me to get off the podium and let other people have a voice too. So, lots of reasons I try to listen first. Also, well, lastly too, I thought sometimes when I speak first, it's usually out of passion or anger. It's not a great place when I blurt out something. So it's maybe better if I wait. – *Eric Moe, WM*

And listening first, I feel that again, Tamron and what Michael said about being top down. There's a lot of talking and not enough listening, and a lot of people that feel small have a lot to say if others would back up and step away and listen. Sometimes when powerful voices speak, it makes people feel lower or less than. So why would I want to share if you're not going to listen? - *Bridgette Lewis, WM*

We put this thing first, but you can always put things first, a second, a third, whatever, but are you practicing it? If you don't practice it, there's no reason you putting it down just to say that you want to listen how you really listen. I'm like you, I need to step away and step back here. Good luck. Be in the background. I mean, I think I bring too much feeling and emotion. – *PMA Colleague*

And I think people as well, sometimes need to know that we're just as broken as they are. And sometimes in that dissonance also a kind of confession, to give space so people can share with you. It's something Maya Angelou says --There's nothing foreign in being human. And I think that's a

great statement. Cause that's what people want to feel and sense if they want to share with you that they want to know what, you have broken urges like this, like, God, so let's talk.

PMA Colleague: When you used the word confession, I was thinking of Diane using kenosis and self emptying how we use confession to kind of clear our minds and our slates and our hearts and be come a receptacle and for Christ and self emptying and that is to listen. We really have to take out our ego to meet somebody else.

: It's powerful

: But don't make it just for one week or one day

: Practice

-exchange between *PMA Colleagues*

Yeah. You know, again, I think there's a lot of assumption that's built into listen first and I think it's well-intentioned assumption, you know, both in the building and outside of the building. I know a lot of people who listen, but they're listening to create a rebuttal. They're, thinking of how they can respond in ways that may not be as well-intentioned, but they're listening, right. And so it's like, what are we saying collectively? The intention of our listening is for, and I think that really matters. – *PMA Colleague*

I think when we get the dark, the dark become dark. We forget about when we were young when we were children and our parent listen to us. So the idea of listening, the experience is that listening, like parents listen to a baby speak directly to them and help them to talk. So that is a methodology that I always think that I should have that because when we get older and we develop our skills for self-survival, we talk a lot in ourself and that we have to be aware of that whether we listen or we're submitted in this. ... That's my experience I always want to be surviving, whatever condition I'm fighting with myself, not with people, but then I allow myself to be tested. I have to encounter difficult people that all dream for me and I want to listen better. I practice that all the time because I work with people who are poor, and they cannot express what they want. So I have to think like I'm not the parent to, just be with them and see what they express with patience – *PMA Colleague*

And to help people find language that is authentic to them. Not putting words in people's mouths and not assuming. I had a non-verbal child for the first six years of her life and it was a real practice in listening, through how teaching her to communicate with her body and it wasn't my language, but it was, she was clearly communicating and I learned to, to listen with my eyes. – *PMA Colleague*

Listen first is my number one, even though I own all the other ones. I don't think we can live fully into our culture code unless we are actually listening to God and others because we need the context of the other. Before we can make any decision or move forward. – *Ray Jones, TFE*

I believe that to listen first is the foundation of very good relationship. Without listening to others, without listening to ourselves and to our own hearts, and to the hearts of others, and to the way that they think, the way that they feel, then we cannot do anything else. It is important in order to prioritize people or to communicate effectively or to cultivate joy or to wrestle with struggles that we learn how to listen. Not to respond, but to listen to really begin and have a firm foundation on relationships. - *Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri, WM*

My favorite is listen first. This is my favorite because sometimes it takes two or three times to listen. And if I don't listen that first time I can't get to the next level. – *Leo Dorsey, COM*

What's your favorite stanza of CC 1.0 and why?

Stanza 2: We prioritize people and accountability.

My favorite stanza for the culture code is prioritizing people because I think that's what the gospel is all about. It's about people. And so I think we need to prioritize people first. — *PMA Colleague*

I think as any organization it is easy to come to the point where you're prioritizing projects and programs and hierarchy and, and bureaucracy, but God loves people. - *PMA Colleague*

I think that it's about coming together as a community working together for one major goal to promote people's welfare and wellbeing and justice especially, and love for the for the whole world. — *PMA Colleague*

People are the most important thing in life and the world. Jesus came as a human. And also chose human beings. 12 people went to people for the great commission, and we are people leading people for the glory of God. — *PMA Colleague*

So I believe prioritizing people is important. It's the most important for me working in ministry, that work for self development of people, because it's very important to hear their needs to help people alleviate their needs, their poverty conditions, and work for them to achieve their goals. — *PMA Colleague*

We do a lot in this country where we're not prioritizing people. We don't have a labor party. We don't have things in this country that take care of the needs of people. So for me, this is why this is my favorite, number one, the gospel's countercultural in this way. It talks about taking care of everyone, right? Making sure that there's a place and space for all people. And I think it's countercultural in the sense that the accountability piece is how does the church call our political leaders and our systems to accountability to take care of those who are on the margins of society. So to me, that's why this is my favorite, is because it's something that we continue to forget to do. And when we forget to do that, all our systems are at are at risk. — *PMA Colleague*

I'm drawn to the second half of it. The prioritization of accountability. And I think the two need to be intentional, it's not just prioritize people and don't worry about accountability. Or not just accountability. And don't worry about the people. It's the tension of holding both of those together. — *PMA Colleague*

I believe prioritizing people and accountability is important because we just have to start with relationship. And if we start with relationship we can do all the other things I think, that are part of our culture code and to not be afraid that can lead us, I would hope to not be afraid of being accountable or not, and to invite others to be accountable. — *PMA Colleague*

So this stanza reminds me that I am a created human being. And I'm accountable first to people. In relationship to them and at the invitation of them doing ministry, at their invitation, not at the invitation of a program or a fund or a corporation, but at the invitation of people. This inspires me to stand up. For myself and ask for others to treat me as a person, prioritizing my wellbeing and my care and my humanity so that I can care for others as well. — *PMA Colleague*

For me, it's mainly accompaniment and working in partnership. You walk with somebody and then you prioritize and listen and be together, but at the same time you help to sharpen your friend as you go on the way. — *PMA Colleague*

[NO RECORDINGS FROM STANZA 3: WE COMMUNICATE WITH CONSISTENCY AND HONESTY]

What's your favorite stanza of CC 1.0 and why?

Stanza 4: We cultivate joy and belonging.

I picked this because it's joy in belonging that keeps me consistently coming back to the spaces that I'm in, including this work. – *PMA Colleague*

I picked this because working for change takes a very long time and the pace can be extremely slow and the change doesn't always move forward, but the direction goes backwards also, it can be very, very disappointing. Failures come, so unless I prioritize cultivating joy, my life can be sucked away so easily. So I need to be very intentional about this way around. – *PMA Colleague*

I choose joy and belonging because that's the only way I can work and do my work, whatever I do. And if I don't find it, I, I leave. So that was the one that was absolutely necessary for existence and I tried to cultivate it for others for my team to make sure we all enjoy the same environment. - *Eliza Minassian, WM*

I chose joy because joy is a fruit of the spirit. And I think you know, when I think of a band of disciples, I want to keep remembering that we are disciples of Jesus Christ and it's in Christ that, we find our source of joy And, knowing also that joy is transformative, for my life personally, as well as for our community. – *PMA Colleague*

Belonging has always been an important, sense of what I hope to cultivate in ministry and in church life, and the sense and understanding that we all belong and we all belong to each other and belong to God. And deepening that communion, and to the point of the hardness and the slowness and the difficulty of the work, like the importance of infusing that space with joy and that like joy should be one of the first things that we experience as we find belonging with each other and belonging with God. – *Jeff Eddings, TFE*

Serving as mission coworker in Peru, I think when I looked at the list, I think if we can cultivate joy and belonging, all of it will seep into the rest of those on our list. And I think that is what will allow us to listen, allow us to collaborate together. So that's why I choose that one. - *Chenoa Stock, WM*
I'm Laura Bryan from Financial Aid, and I selected this group because I love my work and I think if we don't find joy in ministry, we're not doing it right. And I hope to foster that in the people I work with, that they feel that sense of belonging to a purpose that's greater than them, and that does bring great satisfaction and joy to us all. – *Laura Bryan, TFE*

I chose joy in belonging because I really believe that belonging and joy kind of need to be the foundation of the workplace and what we do in order to, I think a lot of us have talked about this, in order to continue to do this hard and long work that sometimes, you know, can be overwhelming, we need to be able to feel like we belong and that we can have joy in the midst of what's happening in our world, and honestly, I think joy and belonging, specifically belonging, creates a safe space for us to work and to continue and to be innovative. – *PMA Colleague*

I'm a mission coworker in Peru and I chose cultivating joy and belonging because it's what I most need in this work. From where I am I see and experience the power and the oppression of empire day

after day, and, it's overwhelming and can bring out the worst in me and makes me, I fall into the traps of empire and I don't want to live like that. – *Jed Koball, WM*

I need a culture of joy and belonging to remind me of who I really am, and to know that I'm not alone in confronting this, what we see in the world. I chose this group of joy and belonging. One of the songs that comes to mind is, Jesus, you're the center of my joy. And I feel like if we could bring joy and hope to everyone that we're able to cross paths with that it would be a better world. And also, making people feel as if they belong, to the body of Christ, but then just also to one another cultivating love and hope, and joy and peace. –*PMA Colleague*

I think I chose this, not necessarily because it's our culture code, but because I need this in order for me to survive and be sane and be the person that I want to be. So for my own wholeness, I think I value this very much and one reason why I say that is because all the forces that are working are in and in and around us, try to separate us. There are so many forces, known and unknown, and some of which I myself have internalized really are against our desire to connect. And so unless I am very, very intentional about cultivating belonging, I can very much become a victim of that. And also, I can be the agent of actually keeping people separated. By so doing, I myself, become separated from everybody else I say I want to serve. So that's why I feel that this is very, very important both for my survival as a human being and as, as a follower of Jesus and as a, as a part of this, as someone who is working for God's mission. – *Unzu Lee, WM*

I was thinking of a story of a young man. This was a number of years ago that started coming to my church that I was serving at the time. And he was just out jail. And he wasn't a Christian. He had some pretty far out beliefs, but he came forward to communion. We offered every week, and this might not be polity, but I served him communion. Cause I was like, you belong, you belong here, you belong to God. The next week I invited him to serve communion with. Even though he still kind of had these far out beliefs and, and like a year or maybe two years later, I had the joy of like baptizing him. But it was because he experienced belonging first That was important, not because he believed certain things that we wanted him to believe. – *Jeff Eddings, TFE*

I work at the Presbyterian Ministry at the UN. So I'm in New York City, and one of the most beautiful parts of our work at the UN. We're a very small office. We have two staff members. I'm just recently full-time. But in our building we have ecumenical partners throughout the entire building that work together. And I've never felt like I belonged more with just different denominations, different partners, than I have in this, in this building that we work together to do this justice and advocacy work. And it keeps me to continue having these partners, having these people, in the community of Christians, not just Presbyterians. I have felt a sense of belonging, but then also we worship together and that brings us joy to continue to do the work. So that's really where I've experienced it and why I continue to do the work in New York while it can get kind of tough. – *Ivy Lopedito, CPJ*

My way of being is to help people feel like they belong. And so I try to be joyful and helping people feel belong. Let them, that they belong is my goal in life. - *Jose LaMont Jones, WM*

I quickly wrote something down as to belong and be appreciated brings Joy. So when you create joy, once you belong, you create joy once you belong somewhere. So, if you bring someone in, you make them feel belong, that they belong with you or with a group or are happy together, then everything else falls from the, from the joy. So, let's get everybody together and feel like they belong. - *Margaret*

I was looking at the lists and there is a lot of important work and a lot of work to be done, but I think for me first, I need to be able to feel that I belong somewhere and have that sort of positive energy and joy. That actually helps me to be more creative or more innovative or going to do any sort of a teamwork and justice work. And I think for me, that's the foundation of rest of the things that were listed in there. - *Hyeyoung Lee, WM*

I believe that when people are joyful, they are very creative. And, so I like to see people being creative and I like people to see that they can imagine a different way of things. And just to have that possibility that when you're joyful, you're more gracious with other people and you're more grateful for the other person's creativeness. – *Jenny Bent, WM*

I think of Joy as not a cause and effect maybe per se, but as a gift of God and as the people of God were called to spread the light and the joy and the belonging that we have freely being given and share that with the world around the globe. And so I think that that is our calling. And that is what helps us belong and bring others along the journey. – *Christina Cosby, WM*

Cultivating joy and belonging is important to me. Because it means something, family means something to me. And I always tease and say, we are the church together, because even when we don't feel like it or when things aren't going our way or we have challenges, we are together so that's why it's my favorite. - *Marla Edwards, TFE*

I feel like I took a little different route in thinking. Belonging is important to me in this context because I feel like it's actually what the church struggles with most is creating welcoming and affirming spaces for all people to feel belonged, and so I love to see like the agitation and commitment there. And then Joy, I consider myself a really joyful person. I think joy is important in this work, especially as a black queer woman, as a marginalized person, this work is emotionally draining. I'm impacted by it personally and directly. And so it's important as part of like my healing as part of like my motivation and inspiration to be able to feel that, that joy in the midst of all of the, the hardship that comes along with the work. - *Samantha Davis, RE&WIM*

I picked up on the word cultivate because it's proactive. And coming from much privilege, I realized that Challenge is so very important to create the environment where everyone feels that they belong. And belonging also entails, the idea of listening, which comes out and a number of the values that are shared. And so it is, cultivate that engaged me in this one that I must be working on it at all times. - *Cobbie Palm, WM*

What picked up for me was the joy aspect. I think the work that we do is hard. I think that it's sometimes thankless. I think that it could be, not to complain, but I think that if we're not intentional about creating joy within, we can get lost in all the hard work of it all. - *Louisa Gallup, WM*

I think that as a church it's important for us to be spiritually nourished in order to be engaged in service in the world, which, like you said, could often be very difficult. And when I was thinking of that spiritual nourishment that we need for ourselves and each other, the idea of joy and belonging is what best sort of captured that idea of spiritual nourishment. - *Josh Heikkila, WM*

What's your favorite stanza of CC 1.0 and why?

Stanza 5: We wrestle with power and privilege.

I think I chose this one because if we really live into it, it would make the biggest difference. -
Tracey King Ortega, WM

Our affinity group, white mission coworkers confronting racism, of which I have a colleague here who's part of that, has met regularly for almost three years to wrestle with this issue of power and privilege and to reflect on the ways that we have been part of the problem in terms of our attitudes and actions in regards to structural racism, we are acknowledging these realities in our individual selves and collective Identity, seeking to repent and repair. – *Bob Rice, WM*

If we are constantly wrestling with power and privilege, we will accomplish the other eight elements of the culture code. We will listen first. We will prioritize people and accountability. We will communicate consistently and with honesty and so forth. - *Simon Doong, CPJ*

I do feel it's foundational in ways that folks have already expressed. And I wanted to add to what people have said, the privilege within our structure of differential salaries and because I was talking to someone who's at or past their retirement age and their pension payment per month will be under \$400. Not enough to live on. So that's a reality in our own structure that we have some people privileged to be making a hundred two, two hundred, three hundred, \$500,000 among our colleagues while some are making 38,000, 40,000. That seems like a very significant privilege and differential in. That until we deal with these other things are going to be very difficult, like teamwork and collaboration. -*Andrew Kang Bartlett, CPJ*

For me, choosing this one was really much more of a personal rather than organizational call because that's where I feel God calling me, is to work on issues of justice and to wrestle with the power and privilege which I have as a white male in the PC(USA) and in society and in the world. -*Doug Tilton, WM*

I think it's good that it got taken out of the original version, this is better, but I still like the imagery of the white supremacy whack-a-mole wording because it's this constant effort that pops up everywhere and we need to be able to recognize it and address it. And so it's a very active call. You have to stay engaged. Yeah. Pay attention. Pay attention. – *PMA Colleague*

I think the commitment to this too is just so important. And also like something to be commended too because in my work, I do corporate engagement and so I'm bringing Presbyterian values into conversations with higher ups at corporations. And so that's a pretty powerful place to be in. But also we're dealing with people in even more powerful positions that need to hear this message more. I just think coming from the church this is important in the fact that we're prioritizing it, but I just think it's, you know, not enough. Others are doing that right now. – *Katie Carter, EDO*

I can maybe add on just saying, I think I picked this one in part because it's unique. That to be a part of an organization that says this is a part of our culture code, seems really, I mean, I think we all probably have friends and family for whom this is not a part of the culture code. And so I'm really grateful to be a part of a organization that says we are going to wrestle with this together recognizing for me in a lot of ways with different privileges that I hold . That can be a choice to wrestle with it or not to wrestle with it in certain contexts. But saying like we are committed to always wrestling with this, I think is a really powerful statement as an organization. - *Heather Leoncini, TFE*

I think wrestling is a good starting point with power and privilege, but maybe not a good ending point. Actually, it's a terrible ending point. We need to start by wrestling, but then where does that take us? And maybe that's kind of a wondering what does this look like for us as a institution, as an

organization, as an organism, as a family of faith? What will this practically look like in the end? Or even as we go, what are some benchmarks that show us we're making some progress along the way?
-*Bob Rice, WM*

Yeah, that's a very good point. I hadn't thought of it like that either -- that wrestling is sort of like saying, trying, you know, we'll try it, but what's the outcome. What's the action part of it? I like that.
- *Tony Oltmann, TFE*

But I think that's what I like about the way the culture code has been designed and that it's the 1.0. When we had that consensus model, I was able to vote in favor because I heard, we're going to continue to revisit this, we're going to continue to adapt it and change it as we live into it. And so I think that's a great observation of this is where we're starting. With the wrestling. Right. But at some point, we're going to have to do better.- *PMA Colleague*

That's what I've struggled with too, is the fact that there are aren't clear milestones. How do we know we're making any progress here? What are the actions that represent us doing each of these things? And so, especially with this one of power privilege, that's so foundational, how do we know we're on our way to making progress? I wrestled between this one and innovate to engage the biggest challenges in the God's world. And I wonder if that's kind of where we're wrestling and then we're going to innovate and really make a big change with a big challenge. So, I don't know, maybe there's a way to help those and go together. — *PMA Colleague*

What's your favorite stanza of CC 1.0 and why?

Stanza 6: We lead with empathy.

Okay, this is Stephanie. And my favorite stanza is Lead with empathy, because if we prioritize empathy in leadership, then it can help us achieve the other stanzas. So if you empathize, you listen better. If you have empathy, you naturally prioritize people, so it impacts all the others. If we lead first with empathy. -*Stephanie*

I work with both mission coworkers through the Equipping for Mission Involvement office, as well as with PC(USA) staff in the United States. And I find that empathy is the one that connects both of those areas of ministry, even if they do seem to be slightly divergent.- *Mary Nebelsick*

I'm a mission coworker in Madagascar, Africa. And I like leading with empathy because when we think of others and their perspective, we are less likely to do things that are hurtful and more likely to treat others with respect. Leading with empathy results in many of the other codes like listening first, cultivating joy and belonging. Wrestling with power and privilege. When we see what others don't have and what we have, we're more inclined to want to do that and also leaning into teamwork and collaboration. -*Elizabeth Turk, WM*

I think that leading with Empathy connects some of the other stanzas in the Culture code. It requires us to see one another in the situation and feelings of another, and also recognizing that we may do or say or not do or say things that cause harm and seeking to understand this more while advocating and leading based on what we hear. -*Ryan White, WM*

Mission coworker serving in Taiwan. And I chose lead with empathy. If part of empathy is seeking to understand and walk in someone else's shoes, I celebrate that we first listen with love and seek to be open, to be changed by the experiences of others. We can only be leaders as we're changed by those we lead and who also become our leaders and teachers. - *John McCall, WM*

I staff the committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment. The work I do often requires me to engage with people who are on opposing sides of certain issues, and I find it very helpful to try to lead with empathy, to understand where they're coming from, understand what they want, understand what they think is the most faithful way forward, and begin to kind of put these two sides in conversations with each other. Find, needles to thread to find faithful ways forward. -*Rob Fohr, EDO*

I'm a mission coworker in Egypt. And I chose empathy because the times that I felt most validated and valued as a person is when others have done that for me, and I'd like to do that for others. -*Darren Kennedy, WM*

I'm coordinator of 1,001 New Worshiping communities. And as the leader of a team, I think empathy is important for me recognizing that the people with whom I work are whole people who bring with them the challenges and joys and struggles of the rest of their life to the work that we do together. Seeing and knowing who we are helps us share burdens and respect the days that are hard, carry one another and be the team that we're called to be. -*Nikki Collins, TFE*

I think my favorite culture code is lead with empathy, because I think it's so important, especially as a community of the children of God, to be able to go into any conversation, any strategy, any plan, or any meeting or any conflict with a recognition that the light of Christ is in the other people with whom I'm conversing or dialoguing, or even debating. and to be able to lead with that, I think is a very powerful, a very useful and a very humbling action. -*PMA Colleague*

I'm a mission coworker in Taiwan, and I like the leading with empathy stanza because it helps us to understand people who may have very different life experiences and upbringing from our own. It may help us to understand our privilege and how we approach our work with this privilege. Empathy is understanding someone else's perspective, but also is self-reflective. -*Emily Seitz, WM*

I work in volunteer ministries with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. In my work with Communities After Disaster, I'm learning that listening with empathy is important. Because there's so much displacement and trauma with the folks that I work with, and I'm learning that in a system that is anticipating change, I, I feel the need for that same approach in our workplace. -*Nell Herring, WM*

It's easier to give others what we've been given. I still have a post-it note from several years ago on a day when several things I missed came together and I wrote, I'm out of strikes, and my supervisor gave me back the post-it note saying, remember, there are nine innings in the game. -*PMA Colleague*
Empathy is the ground we all tread upon. -*Mike Ferguson, COM*

What's your favorite stanza of CC 1.0 and why?

Stanza 7: We lean into teamwork and collaboration.

Mission Coworker, based in Africa. If all talents which constitute our human capital together are recognized, valued, and utilized, we can go much farther than going alone or as a few privileged people. -*Christi Boyd, WM*

I work with the Peacemaking Program. I chose leaning into teamwork and collaboration because I notice in my work, although many of the tasks I'm doing are individual, our individual efforts with follow-through and communication are the nuts and bolts of the logistic associated with that task.

The overarching goal really is impossible to accomplish without the openness and welcome of my colleagues in various ministry areas, programs, and agencies. So I really have come to value the openness that my colleagues have to welcome my questions and respond very graciously to the teamwork that is required to accomplish the overarching goal. – *Amy Lewis, CPJ*

The team I work with is Peacemaking. And it is inherently a team that work does teamwork in collaboration. It's kind of also in my nature. So that's why I love my team and I love my work because I get to work in collaboration with colleagues all across the agency. –*Carl Horton, CPJ*

I chose this team because I am involved in a lot of teamwork and collaboration, both amongst the One Great Hour of Sharing ministries, but really across PMA there are so many opportunities for collaboration, whether it is working on resources, for instance, with communications. I know we worked together fairly recently to do our SDOP Sunday resource, or whether it is partnering with community groups like we did in Puerto Rico with PDA and PHP and also by nature, I am someone that really enjoys teamwork and collaborating. And so, yeah, very happy to be part of SDOP. We also have that spirit of teamwork and collaboration amongst ourselves and really happy to continue that collaborating work with other partners as well. –*Margaret Mwale, CPJ*

I serve as Associate for Theology. I think leaning onto collaboration matters in my work because every work we do at PMA and the church level, there's always the undergirding, theological reflection, and theological foundation we need to think about. So, I find this, number seven stanza, very important. And then also I think somehow it connects all the other stanzas too. So, yes, collaboration. Yay. – *SoJung Kim, TFE*

Teamwork and collaboration is really what we're all about. I really get my energy from meeting and working with people and brainstorming ideas. –*Mark Thomson, COM*

I'm the Associate for Native American Ministries. I've been deployed now for 10 years, even before COVID. And so, when I come to Louisville I like to visit with the different agencies, make appointments to collaborate, learn best practices and stuff like that. We like to do that also with the seven of us who are associates. –*Irvin Porter, RE&WIM*

World Mission is all about partnership, and this is borne out in how we relate to our colleagues and other people with whom we work. And that is a very positive thing. –*Dan Turk, WM*

I resonate with some of what the other folks have said, but I also think that true teamwork and collaboration allows us to bring our full selves better and balance each other out. And I think when you can really work in a team it helps with burnout and that kind of thing. So, it allows me to do my best work but also knowing I have someone to balance that out is really helpful. Also, just the joy that comes with being able to work with people on something we can be really proud of. –*Jessica Maudlin, CPJ*

I'm with Jessica. I think everyone has pretty much said what we need to say about this, other than I could not do my job without teamwork and collaboration. It just wouldn't happen -- I work with grants. –*Mary Lidtke, CPJ*

I'm Kelly Abraham with Presbyterian Association of Musicians. I chose this because I believe the resources in this organization and our partners are overwhelming and abundant. When we approach teamwork with humility and open hands and open hearts it's amazing what can happen and what we can learn from one another; and there is so much to learn. –*Kelly Abraham, PA*

What's your favorite stanza of CC 1.0 and why?

Stanza 8: We pursue positive impact.

I'm a social media specialist. I like seeing the positive impact that our stories have, even though I have to see the negative comments every day, it's the one positive comment that outweighs all the negative ones. - *Victoria Shircliffe, COM*

I'm a mission coworker and I work with young children. And I enjoy seeing how my words and my stories about their experiences bring about a change in people that read the stories to want to support the mission work that I'm doing in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Words are important because they can diminish a person's humanity, or they can empower people to see them. People who are resourceful and people who have just been dispossessed as opposed to being in poverty. So we create scenarios in our heads with the words we use. So, a positive impact can be made by the our choice of words. - *Cheryl Barnes, WM*

I'm serving as mission coworker in the Philippines. I chose pursuing positive impact because I am deeply moved by the phrase in the Lord's prayer of thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And so bringing the fullness of life into people is really about creating changes and results. You know, we want to see among our community, especially with the, the young people I serve, with a sense of transformation in their lives and to see God at work. - *Dessa Palm, WM*

What's your favorite stanza of CC 1.0 and why?

Stanza 9: We innovate to engage the biggest challenges in God's world.

I very much appreciate innovate to engage the biggest challenges in God's world because imagination is in our ordination vows. Yet imagination is the thing that we must make room for and make space for and make time for because we get so busy. So I love the idea of being creative and imaginative and creative as we work toward the things God has for us to do. – *Cindy Correll, WM*

I like number nine because I believe one of the biggest challenges in God's world is always to exalt our brothers and sisters and get outside ourselves. And the Bible clearly tells us to exalt others, esteem them higher than us, and also love thy neighbor as thyself. So the fact that you have to put an effort to make sure you're self-checking to where you're helping your brother and your sister think that's a great thing to do. - *Lawrence Robertson, RE&WIM*

I often see churches or people who have the right mind and right thoughts, but the way they deliver it is very outdated and it does not affect people. So we need to be innovative and creative. -*PMA Colleague*

I like this one in particular because with the YAV program, we're really breaking barriers to not have so many silos, and to really engage in the true church of God to be intergenerational and the YAVs are actually going out and doing that work. And also, with breaking silos. Seeing people as other othering, we use the words marginalized and things to uplift communities, but yet we are still harming them by saying certain words. So, in the Y AV community, we really work on choosing our words wisely before we speak and think. And so we're trying to build a more inclusive community by just starting with the basics of just meeting people where they are in the sense of going to them

and just learning and listening and shutting up. So that's why I like number nine.- *Destiny Hodges, WM*

I'm going to speak from my former work and my current work. My former work was with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and I still get to work with them, but, disaster exacerbates problems that people have and also provides opportunity in the midst of the chaos for innovative ways of not just responding to the disaster, but trying to do development work, advocacy work, and rebuilding sustainable communities where sometimes they didn't exist. And since it affects the most vulnerable the most severely, it gives people an opportunity to see people in their community that they've never seen before. And then that's a transformative community opportunity. My current work is working not just with PDA, but with also the self-development and peace building offices that are lodged in CPJ. And with the migration office, which is part of PDA, but we're working with separately. What we're trying to do right now is work on intersections to make us both more collaborative but also more innovative in the way we work out of the various contexts that bring us into relationship to do that. And then also working a lot with World Mission on building a global advisory panel for our denomination and being more strategic about how we listen to the global community, both in our midst and the global community out there. - *Laurie Kraus, CPJ*

Question #2: Which stanza do you find most challenging to lean into? How do you hope to grow in this area?

Stanza 1: We listen first.

I will demonstrate that this is a challenge for me and I will talk first. Among these nine challenges, I find one, listen first, the most challenging for me and for the majority. I would think this is the one that I should always keep in mind, and I should continuously work on it. I don't think I will ever be perfect in it. And especially with age and with work dynamics and, you know, shortage of time, I always find it tempting to jump to conclusions, to action once the conversation starts. And I have to remind myself that, no, no, no, you have to let the person or the situation, you know, develop, grow. You know, listen til the end and then give some time. This is what I do now, and I give some time for myself to reflect on how I really want to respond. Do I want to respond? And only then jump ahead and again, it's challenging with years. So it's a constant ongoing work on oneself is required. -- *Eliza Minasyan, WM*

Listening first, I'm more of, I guess, a goal-oriented person, and so I don't, like, first of all, I'd like to start off like saying I hate meetings. I hate long meetings, and if meetings go over, I just, I shut off. I mean, if the meeting's 10 minutes, I can maybe last a little bit longer. So it's a struggle for me to listen, because usually I sit there and think, okay, we have these goals. How are we gonna achieve these goals, and let's go forward. And I have to be mindful that people are involved and they have things to do and they need to speak in order to achieve those goals. And so it's a struggle for me. Yeah, I need to be more conscious and actively listening. Listening. So yeah, that's my thing. -*PMA Colleague*

For me, listening first is more of a structural thing. It's more nuanced, because if you're inviting someone to a table to listen to them, you're automatically in a space of power yourself. And so it's

more about allowing the other person to create the space. Or even you're coming to their space versus inviting them in to be like, we're listening to you. -*PMA Colleague*

I'm a social media specialist, and as someone who is Gen Z and has grown up with social media and works on social media for work, TikTok has fried my brain and I agree that long meetings are rough and I cannot get through it, I feel like, without checking social media for work or scrolling or doing something. So, I do find it hard to always be paying attention. Also, as someone with anxiety, you are often preparing in your head what you're gonna say and not listening to what the person talking is saying. So that's why I find it challenging. -*Victoria Shircliffe, COM*

Well, I was a little surprised that this was my response when we got asked this question, because I've always considered myself a good listener, and I think I am a good listener when I remind myself to be focused on listening. But as I've gotten older and more self-confident, I'm also more free to just jump in and express myself. And that has, I've noticed recently, sometimes led me to speak over others or to jump in with my take on things before I've really listened to understand the perspective of the other people who are around or why the question has been brought to us or whatever the situation is. So I'm trying to be intentional about listening first, and making that something that I take on as a practice to be really actively engaged in so that I'm not unintentionally silencing others or offending others or making assumptions about what's going on that might not actually be the case. -*PMA Colleague*

I recognize that I do need to grow in some ways in the area of listening, I think it's one of the things that I would like to work on. The way I hope to grow in this area would be becoming a more active listener. And by that I mean perhaps asking more clarifying questions as someone is speaking. Making sure I'm maintaining eye contact so my eyes don't wander somewhere else and I start thinking of something else. And then also really making an attempt to listen to someone shows that I consider that person to be important, that they are the thing that is most important that I'm focused on at that particular moment in time. And I think I owe that to them to show them that honor and respect. And also to be able to respond appropriately, I need to listen well and I need to be able to ask appropriate questions. I need to be able to encourage the person so that they feel free as they are speaking to me to share what they came to share with me, what they want me to understand. And I think that that is really important rather than just wanting to get my point across or to be thinking about what I want to say to them. But I really want to make sure I listen better than I sometimes do. -*Margaret Mwale, CPJ*

So for me, it's challenging to listen first. Sometimes it may be perceived that there's actually hard dialogue that you have to listen to, or that the only way that we can communicate is verbally. There's a lot said that's not actually spoken with words. So for me, what I've been really trying to lean into more in the past couple months is just being in tune with what's going on and reading the room and just being in community. Sometimes you don't have to say something or physically speak the words to listen. And I think as we start to engage more of each other on this type of level, in these types of groups and settings we can start listening in other ways besides just our ears, but also with our eyes you know, with communion or our mouths and in other ways, than just our ears. -*Destiny Hodges, WM*

I've always struggled with listening. But I also think that it's one of those things that I really want to lean into, because I've actually been involved with a number of different institutions where the conflicts have happened and gone very, very deeply. And in actuality over time, you come to understand that they really are two sides saying the same thing, and it's just a miscommunication that

could have been avoided had I just been listening better to begin with. So, my name is Darren Kennedy and I have a problem with listening. -*Darren Kennedy, WM*

Which stanza do you find most challenging to lean into? How do you hope to grow in this area?

Stanza 2: We prioritize people and accountability.

I was saying that prioritizing people and accountability and especially prioritizing people over program is just a challenge in the day-to-day work where it's very easy to focus on things that are maybe more measurable or things that are more concrete rather than relationships and the individual people. -*PMA Colleague*

You know, the act of prioritizing people requires us to put some people in a hierarchical order. And that in and of itself is a very difficult, difficult thing for me. And we all have multiple intersectional identities. So, the act of prioritizing itself doesn't sound good to me. And I, somehow, I guess I keep doing it. But I'm not exactly conscious of how I do it. But this kind of forces me to look into it more. I think that's all I can say. But, again, my emphasis is that we are all intersectional. I have intersectional identities. So, one can be a woman, cisgender and, and poor and homeless and an ethnic minority. And so on. How do you prioritize? Yeah. So, that's hard for me. -*PMA Colleague*

I think prioritizing people and accountability is hard, because it's the struggle with prioritizing which people, what people, accountability to whom. Are we accountable first to the institution, to the constituents, to our supervisors or our team. So it's always a struggle of figuring out what the priority is. I appreciate the way you said that. -*PMA Colleague*

I guess I picked this one because I'm a little confused about the combination prioritize people and accountability. And I guess I maybe would've phrased it, "prioritize relationships." Maybe somebody else said that. Other than people, I'm not really sure of how it goes together. I mean, I guess I could imagine how it goes together. But I'm a little confused about it. -*Eileen Schumann, CPJ*

So, can I add something? It's interesting both your perception and your perception of that made me realize my perception was different, which makes me think it needs to be clarified. Because when I read prioritize people and accountability, I saw that as over other things. But the way it's written, and I get why you guys got that, is prioritizing people. And I thought that is not good writing. That needs to be clarified, because I think now I'm assuming they mean prioritize people over processes, over organizations, over corporations - that kind. See, I assume though, and I don't know that that's clear. And so I think that would be really good feedback for the writers that they need to clarify that. -*PMA Colleague*

And I think that's really interesting because the contrast between your comments and the previous group's comments who liked it first were seeing people as humanity, you know, recognizing people's humanity and prioritizing that. And if you're doing that, there's a tension about accountability. You know, because like you're saying, the ways you're problematizing this, there are accountabilities in how we do prioritize. You know, put people first, you know? -*PMA Colleague*

So I'm most challenged particularly by the accountability piece. Prioritizing people is very important and key and I'm not challenged by that. But the accountability - there's a question of how do you hold people accountable with grace? How do you give space for people to make mistakes and for people to learn and still hold them accountable and I haven't quite figured that out yet. -PMA
Colleague

[NO RECORDINGS FROM STANZA 3: WE COMMUNICATE WITH CONSISTENCY AND HONESTY]

Which stanza do you find most challenging to lean into? How do you hope to grow in this area?

Stanza 4: We cultivate joy and belonging.

I work with the Presbyterian Hunger Program. I think that this is one of the more challenging ones to lean into, specifically the joy part, just because so much of the work that we do is so heavy and overwhelming, and then to be informed enough to do the work you kind of have to dig into a lot of really not very uplifting things. So I think it's not necessarily that I don't find any joy in my work, but it is the most challenging, I think, to lean into just because of the nature of the work that we do. -
Jessica Maudlin, CPJ

I think because we live in a world that's so joyless, I think belonging is a big deal in a world that's incredibly divided and polemicized. It's harder to bring joy in the world when people are insecure about finances. They're insecure about when they're gonna have their next meal, when churches are worried about whether or not they're gonna close. And so it's not so much not having joy, it's just a matter of being able to foster this. I think one of the most powerful things that we have is belonging, right? And I think that people don't feel they belong because of who they are, maybe because of where they are, you know, and so, this is a challenge because how do we get people to understand from different political perspectives that we are people of Christ, right? And so we are divided politically. We are divided theologically. And I think that this makes this very hard to do. And so, joy looks different and on different sides, right? And, in our political realm, joy is what I get when the other side fails. Joy is what I get when the other side doesn't make it. Joy is what I get when we are winning. And I think there's this idea of winning that's so ingrained in our culture and it makes joy hard to do, and it makes this kind of belonging hard to foster. And so that's hard work, but it doesn't mean that we don't do it and we don't try to do it. But I think it's going to be a challenge, because it's gonna require that we do things very differently. It's gonna require really that we use the arts, it's gonna require that we do things that we have ignored, or we walked away from, or do things in a way that is very different than how we normally approach things. -*Alonzo Johnson, CPJ*

I'm the editor of Unbound and I have no problem cultivating joy and belonging outside of this institution. It is within it that I struggle with, not with authentic joy, not sometimes façades of happiness or façades of forced things. And that's always been my issue with church is that, like Alonzo was saying, people experience joy in very different ways, but that's not the same as happiness and that's not the same as belonging. And belonging is more if I can be my authentic self and express myself in the ways in which God created me to be through that. Specifically, as a queer person, I experience joy differently than other people. And so my issue is the authenticity behind what we say is joy, and it's really rooted in the belonging and for all of us to be our authentic selves

and own it and learn from that. And that has always been my struggle with the church - is to allow space for authenticity of everyone and allow us to express it how we want to and hold that space. And so that for me is belonging. And I think we have a long way to go in cultivating that authenticity. -*Lee Catoe, CPJ*

And interestingly what you were saying, because for me, part of the challenge of this was having the joy and the belonging put together because they seem like very different types of work. A lot of my work with refugees and people that are in difficult situations isn't about cultivating joy in them but is being open to feeling the joy when they share it and being able to then help them express that. But belonging for me, actually often the most important time of belonging is when I'm not joyful and being able to belong and have people love me when I'm not happy and when I'm not in joy. So that for me is part of internal work and then there's the community cultivating. So what am I cultivating inside me, but also what am I cultivating? And I can imagine cultivating belonging for others, or at least creating space for sense of belonging. The joy part is a little bit harder to see how that happens. -*Susan Krehbiel, CPJ*

It is a difficult time for me to have joy because I'm involved with Russia, Ukraine, and Bellarus. That is really difficult. And I bring back stories and lots of people aren't ready for the weight of it. So I feel outside of the community, the church that I worship in. Anybody that makes the choices I make must be strange. There has been joy. Right now it's a very heavy, heavy time. I feel more belonging on the other side of the Atlantic than I do here. -*Ellen Smith, WM*

I'm working in Niger and I think it's the word cultivating that I would find the most difficult part cause cultivating is a long term really getting involved to do, deeply involved. It's just a lot easier, I think, to be a lot more superficial and go along with life than to really cultivate. -*Jim McGill, WM*

I find it especially difficult to cultivate joy and belonging with this institution at this point. I experience joy more with the folks who are probably suffering more in Guatemala and Mexico. But there's so much of the wrestling with power and privilege in this institution and so much of a sense of not being listened to and being excluded that it's very difficult for me to find joy in the part of my job that means deal with the PC(USA) structure. -*Leslie Vogel, WM*

I serve as a mission coworker in Costa Rica, and when I get up in the morning and I have to connect via Zoom to some PMA event, all of my energy just dissipates. I am finding dealing with the institution just a complete energy drain. It's not life giving. We are required to be present, but do we belong? Are Our insights, our experiences at all solicited, taken into account, celebrated in those spaces. So I just find it an increasing burden and I would like so much for it to be different cuz it's very different when I connect with my colleagues who work in Latin America. So that' s the big challenge right now. -*Karla Koll, WM*

I love my work. I'm really privileged in the work that I do. I manage a process of giving money to people to go to college. We're helping people pay off their student loan debt, and there's so much joy in that work. I do struggle a bit with the distinction between cultivating joy and expecting it and making that a burden for the people that I supervise particularly. You know, when your supervisor's constantly telling you, well, this is the greatest thing on earth, what do you mean you're not happy? That's not fair, and it's hard to sometimes recognize your own privilege in the system. I'm a budget manager. I'm a supervisor. I'm probably the most lightly supervised person I know. So you know, that all plays into that. But I do think that it's something we should be committed to- the things that

we do, are joyous, and they should cultivate belonging because if we're not doing that, we're just not doing this right. -*Laura Bryan, TFE*

Joy is such a good thing to be led forth in joy, and somehow my personality doesn't always lend itself to that. I'm a one on the enneagram, which means I'm a perfectionist. I struggle with anger. And I can be downer. I'm a reformer. I see what could be done. And so cultivating joy is an important discipline for me. Belonging is essential. And I've been privileged with belonging most of my life. Not always, but I recognize what it feels like to not belong and I've tried and I'm trying to participate in helping other people feel they belong. And one last thing I'll say is the intersection for me of joy and belonging happens when I connect with people. Persons that are somehow different from me, see the world different from me, experience it different from me, but I'm able to really go deep and be present with and love that person, like deep, deep, supernatural joy in the spirit when that happens. And I can think of experiences of that nature where I've been with people that normally I wouldn't spend time with, but I just choose to spend time with them and I feel such joy. So thank you. -*Bob Rice, WM*

I staff the committee on mission responsibility through investment. It's an incredible honor to do this work. However, it is very challenging on both joy and belonging because of the issues that we work with are some of the most consequential in the world, and we're dealing with some of the most powerful institutions that like the way things are and don't really wanna move. That's challenging on the joy side, on the belonging side, I think when we're at our best, we are helping facilitate conversation between groups of people that are opposed to each other and that would never talk to each other, but we can kind of serve as that bridge. And so we kind of can be accepted in many conversations, but we don't really belong anywhere. And I've kind of taken solace in the sermon on the mount, blessed be the peacemakers because I think peacemaking when it's done right is really lonely work. - *Rob Fohr, EDO*

I work very closely with Rob, so I echo a lot of what he said, but just dealing with really heavy, tough issues. I also echo what Laura said too. I think there's forced joy and belonging, and I think that can be really toxic. I've worked for organizations before that say, you know, we're one big family, and I think if it's forced, it can just backfire. And also, like you said, I come to work to work. I tend to be a serious person. So I think just cultivating joy is just a general challenge for me. -*Katie Carter, EDO*

Which stanza do you find most challenging to lean into? How do you hope to grow in this area?

Stanza 5: We wrestle with power and privilege.

I think the culture code stanza of wrestling with power and privilege is a challenge because I would venture to say many people in the world have power or privilege of some nature, and there's so many intersections around the power that we can hold. And so I think especially people like us working for the agency we are in and being that it's a corporate culture as well, we always have to be looking at ourselves and being aware of the decisions we make, the way we communicate, the way we just relate with one another and with our work to be noticing and just be aware of the power - I need to be aware of the power I hold, of the privilege I have and how that impacts others or could impact others if I'm not checking myself. And being mindful. -*PMA Colleague*

I think what I'm going to do to try to wrestle with this is that I will trust God and trust that even if there were consequences like, I wish to lose my pride or my self-thoughts and image, or my safety, or my job, whatever it is that has to be risked in order to wrestle with power and privilege internally and externally. Even if I did lose those things that I'm still in God's hands. -*PMA Colleague*

Which stanza do you find most challenging to lean into? How do you hope to grow in this area?

Stanza 6: We lead with empathy.

I guess it really is a confession that I find that I've got all these ideas in my head that I've already thought through. And so when people are doing it differently I find myself judging. And so I want to be able to lead with empathy and see the other person. And I think if we do a lot of these other ones that will inevitably make us empathetic. If we're listening first, for example. But I wanna be able to I mean now I'm, I'm struggling cuz I'm like, oh wait, is leading with empathy, listening first. But I think they, they kind of go together. In order to have empathy, you have to be able to stop and listen. And so I wanna be able to understand the other's perspective. I just wanna do better in that sense. And I think the judgment's gonna come in my head cuz that's just how we are as humans. But to be able to acknowledge like, no, that's not fair, let's understand that everybody has their own experience and their own challenges and their own gifts. And so how do I see the whole person? -*Tracey King Ortega, WM*

Jimmie Hawkins with the advocacy offices in DC and the UN, leading with empathy, I think part of the difficulty for me is really when I see people who are in need. And I don't know how to respond. A lot of times in in DC when I catch the train in, I have to walk from Union Station up to the office about a half a mile, and there are homeless people everywhere and oftentimes, you know, give someone a couple dollars, but nothing to really change the impact on, on their lives. And, and one of my frustrations has been how do I really make an impact, obviously systemically, but individually as well, and really have agency to help people to empower themselves. And so that's a personal frustration with me. And also how to use the resources of the church to have long-term systemic change in a city like DC and across the nation, especially dealing with members of Congress. And we know how easy to get along and how agreeable all of them are. But with a split house, I mean the House and the Senate right now, not a lot is going to happen. We're looking at debt ceiling and things. So on that line, how do we really utilize our resources to make a difference with empathy, understanding where they're coming from, but also understanding the limitations of the work that we do. -*Jimmie Hawkins, CPJ*

I'm a mission coworker serving in Korea. I think leading with empathy is the stanza of the Culture Code that's both my favorite and the most important, but also the most difficult. Or at least when I'm feeling conflicted or in a situation where I don't feel safe myself. When I'm feeling comfortable and safe, it, I find it easier to be like, yeah, sure, whatever you guys want, that's no problem. But when I'm feeling threatened or when I'm, for example, I work in a situation of conflict where there's an ongoing situation of war in Korea, and there are two sides who have real legitimate claims to trauma at the hands of each other. So what does it look like to hold empathy for conflicting groups and also to hold empathy for those in the US who are connected to positions of power and maintaining a position maintaining a structure of imperialist control over that situation. You know, when can I find empathy in myself for those who don't want to hear what our partners in Korea are saying about how maybe we should be changing our foreign policy or maybe be changing the way that our church

relates to the church in Korea. When all that starts getting into conflict, I find it a whole lot easier to feel like my feelings on this are the most correct, or I have listened to the partners better than those here in the US who, you know, don't want to listen. And so it's much harder for me to, to go into every single conversation and say, you know, we all have hopes and fears and desires and needs for safety and security, and how to hold all of that together, even when it tends to clash. -*Kurt Esslinger, WM*

I think a thing that our team does very well with each other is leading with empathy. I think that that started with the previous coordinator of the program, Ruth Ferrell and Rebecca Barnes, who is our coordinator now. I think that they exercise that in leadership and it gives the rest of us permission to do the same. Particularly remembering that we are whole people with so many things that are happening outside of our work and that we deal with really heavy work topics. That it's important I think to be able to remember, you know, even if I need to offer critical feedback or whatever, that this is a whole person with a whole life and a whole set of things before they are just a person doing a project. -*Jessica Maudlin, CPJ*

I work in Racial Equity and Women's Intercultural Ministries and you know, I'm about as white and 60 something as you can be. And for me, it creates a tension in my mind that I probably manage more money at the office level than most people in the building. And then I created the budgets for racial equity and women's intercultural ministries and then I became the fireman for this area during Covid because we didn't have a full-time director and we had no associate directors. So I found myself in the position of having, whether I saw it or not, there was real authority over the resources of racial equity and women's intercultural ministries. And it really bothered me. So I found myself bending over backwards and sometimes making bad decisions in order to accommodate, but I guess that's natural. I was encouraged to consider applying for the associate director's position for racial equity, and then I realized that the day-to-day operational Control of all the resources and most of the intercultural associates would once again fall on a 60 something year old white man. And I believe that the leadership within racial equity should reflect the communities that we serve. So I said, no. -*Tim McAllister, RE&WIM*

Which stanza do you find most challenging to lean into? How do you hope to grow in this area?

Stanza 7: We lean into teamwork and collaboration.

I actually chose number 7 twice. For me, I've been struggling with silos for years. We work and we survive based on what we accomplish at the office level. And even one level in the structure removed it's difficult to see how you relate to that, and if you go two levels, it gets really difficult. But some of what I see now with some of these cross cultural teams – In the beginning I thought they were distracting from my work, but now I find they're actually enhancing it. So for me, that was good. The fourth one I chose was also number 7, because I work in RE&WIM and for each of the demographics we serve, there is one person – one – for all of those communities all around the denomination. And typically they're working mono culturally and there's not a lot of cross-pollination between the offices, and I would like to see the teamwork and collaboration between those communities become more mutually supportive. -*Tim McAllister, RE&WIM*

I chose 7 again. Because everyone is so busy, because everyone has so many things on their plates, we don't always take the time to consider the gift around us or have the time to take to consider the

gifts around us. WE often knee jerk and ask and seek resources with which we are familiar and are easiest. It limits us. It stunts our growth, and my initial thought was we have the gifts here. And we just have to take that time to breath. -*Kelly Abraham, PAM*

For me the challenge resides in that sometimes in gatherings like this there's a lot of –maybe it's personality—because I take the information in but I take a while to process it. And I feel that sometimes in these gatherings it's like they want to hear a thought immediately. And maybe the thought comes after I need time to think about it. And that doesn't' come out maybe at the time. And I wonder if they have it into account when we have these meetings. -*PMA Colleague*

I came from the power and privilege code stanza and I think these are related because the expectation that we collaborate and do teamwork together is influenced by the internal structures and the power dynamics within the structure. So for an example we have a situation where some people are paid 5-6x more than others, they have the ability to hire and fire people, and yet there's this kind of myth that we can just equally collaborate and be in a team together on an equal playing field. When the reality is that yeah, it's safer for some people to do that than it is for others. So I think it's an artificial kind of teamwork and collaboration until you address those differentials in whether it be gender based, class based, salary, power based, etc. -*PMA Colleague*

[NO RECORDINGS FROM STANZA 8: We pursue positive impact.]

Which stanza do you find most challenging to lean into? How do you hope to grow in this area?

Stanza 9: We innovate to engage the biggest challenges in God's world.

I work in volunteer ministries with PDA. Yesterday one of my colleagues in CPJ mentioned that in order to be innovative, you have to have to have space for safety and the bandwidth in which to do it. And so in order to get into that creative head space, the kind where we are trying to innovate and solve problems and meet the needs in God's changing world, we have to have safety and we have to have bandwidth. And often in my ministry, I don't have the bandwidth to be able to do that. And so that is a barrier for me in some ways, and that's why I find this particular point the most challenging. -*Nell Herring, CPJ*

I've been in working in South Sudan for most of the last 15 years. I actually love the point that you made. Because the organization I've worked with was created by their council of churches to address issues of conflict and trauma, and I worked specifically with the Peace Institute that trains grassroots leaders with skills and addressing trauma and conflict in the very thing that you're naming bandwidth and security, the things that haven't been present and the innovation that's happened on the part of our partners has been incredible to watch, and I just want to, because we talk about stories, I want to share a story like we, I know we're talking about the innovation that's come through the pandemic, but the reality is, at least for the work we were doing in South Sudan, before the pandemic, there was like a huge civil war and there was through PCUSA funding and initiatives from other partners, there was the idea of having more women.who were leaders. So, there was a dormitory being built. There's

an idea of being able to have more leaders from around the nation. So, there was representation from all the different states and refugee communities, several refugee communities. And then the war happened and like everything stopped, not another brick was brought to build up the dormitory for ladies. And there was an opportunity to be able to get safety and bandwidth to help do the work more. So for the last couple of years there's been the attempt to be able to do research, to be able to develop curriculum for some of the peace building work. But when we talk about some of the best, like the things that have gone well and the challenges, it's been the creativity of partners and sometimes the denomination lagging behind and wanting to be able to, to be creative in a, in a similar way, to be able to create space for bandwidth and security to develop it. There are many thoughts going through my head right now, but just kind of naming it, I think is one of the greatest joys but it's also one of the greatest challenges that we're facing here. -*Shelvis Smith Mather, WM*

To amplify what Nell said, in addition to bandwidth avenues for innovative ideas that come from spaces like this to make their way and diffuse throughout the organization, I definitely see how we're developing those and glimmers of those. But those have been hard to come by in the past, and if we're also naming the past, we have to name that a lot of change, which is what innovation is, that has come in the PMA hasn't always been super positive. And so that's the institutional memory that we're working with. And so how do we break open our hearts to receive new things that come that actually might be good when that's really just not the muscle memory you've developed when you've been here? I mean, I'm really hopeful for so much that's happening in our agency and, yet we are knocking up against some institutional hurts. -*Denise Anderson, CPJ*

I'm a mission coworker serving in Peru, but I work more directly actually with the Presbyterian Hunger Program and their joining Hands Work and it's working with global partners to kind of confront these, the global economy basically, and these massive powers, mining industry, oil industry. And our partners around the work have made a lot of progress, had a lot of victories changing laws and reclaiming lands. But we know that the work can grow and become so much bigger and better if we engage more Presbyterians. And it is so incredibly hard. We're always looking for gimmicks to get them involved. And you know, they hear our stories and I think Presbyterians are overwhelmed. I think they're inspired; they just don't know what to do cuz they want to do something and we don't always have that tangible thing to do. But that's not necessarily what we need from them. We just need consistent presence. And I don't know how to keep that moving among Presbyterians. All I know how to do is tell a story and be authentic and the hope and prayer that people will just keep walking with us. But I, I don't know how to keep doing that. Thank you. -*Jed Koball, WM*

I'm Dori Hjalmarson. I work with world Mission. I serve in Honduras accompanying a Presbyterian church or a denomination. And I co-sign on what Denise said. I had a, I have a. I guess just to lay it all out there, like the thought actually crossed my mind. Are they calling all us mission coworkers back to Louisville to fire us? That's kind of what I thought was happening for the briefest second. So I don't trust that process or the change or the, there's like that trigger hair trigger fear. Fear, that's, that's comes with innovation. So the word innovation makes me think of programs or tricks or gimmicks, and it doesn't make me Focus on the people that I'm in relationship with and that I've been invited to be in relationship with and so that's why I find this one challenging for me. - *Dori Hjalmarson, WM*

I'm a mission coworker in Madagascar. And for me, I was just thinking about it personally, and I just find that I get so wrapped up in doing the work that I'm doing, that I don't find the time to sit and think about different ways of doing it. Because everything's just coming at you right after, and so you

just keep going down that path. And so it says, well, what are you gonna do? So I said, well, I'm gonna try to ask myself, is there a different way to do this? And read up on what the center of innovation puts out. So, you know, maybe they're gonna put out some things that I could try that I wouldn't think up myself. And , also, what's pretty cool is Nell and I picked empathy as our favorite thing and then came to this place as the hardest thing. So, but we got here and there was a whole group of Niners just really loving innovation that had left. So thanks be to God that we all have different gifts. Amen. -*Elizabeth Turk, WM*

I'm a mission coworker in the Philippines. I think for me, what I'm experiencing is, Innovation and being relevant. How do we translate this concept of innovation to be constantly relevant, to capture the excitement of the congregations, as Jed said how is it? And so, this is what makes it difficult for me. To be innovative, but then to stay relevant to the context. This is something that I feel needs to be constantly kept in balance. -*Cobbie Palm, WM*

I'm a mission coworker to Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The challenge for me is when I hear the word innovative, my brain goes to this place where there's, it's something that's never been done before, and the Bible says that there's nothing new under the sun. So I'm trying to always think, you know, how can I be innovative if it's already been done before. And if it's been done before and it hasn't worked, how can I do it again and make it work? So that's a challenge for me. -*Cheryl Barnes, WM*

Question 3: Think of your closest team of colleagues at PMA. Which of these stanzas does that team best embody with each other?

Stanza 1: We listen first.

I am at the number one "listen first" post, and I have been joined by only two people who believe that their team of colleagues are good listeners, and we have discussed how we feel like that's telling about the PMA, that we don't have a culture of listening if we have 200 people here and only two have come forward to say, "my team listens." We have great work to do. One of the folks has lifted up that they feel like PMA does a great job of hearing but not listening, that they hear things and there's lots of words. There's lots of videos and recordings and that sort of thing. But for this individual, what listening means is listening with an open mind and heart, and then hearing what someone says, processing that, and then acting upon it in a way that that brings forth the need of what that person has said. And for this individual, which I would say I probably agree with, there's a lot of hearing and PDA not listening and not even making space for listening. Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. PMA. PMA. Too many acronyms. We've got acronym overload. Maybe that adds to the listening barrier. So yeah, we need to make space for listening within the PMA. -*DeEtte Decker, COM*

Think of your closest team of colleagues at PMA. Which of these stanzas does that team best embody with each other?

Stanza 2: We prioritize people and accountability.

I'm the African American cultural associate. I have five other associates with me Hispanic as well African, as well as native Americans as well as Middle Eastern. And I think all of us in our own particular constituencies prioritize people. It's not about us. We try to empower and mobilize and find resources for the constituency- that is what we do to support the people in that level. So, it's really about people and all of our constituencies. And we are accountable because we're kind of the mid governing voice for them so we have to reach down and be with them in one sense, and then bring up their concerns to a level where we can actually actualize some of the needs and concerns they have. -*Michael Moore, RE&WIM*

I chose, well, my team does pretty much all these pretty well, but I wanna choose two because my wife and my daughter we're in Nicaragua. And any issues I had, anything I needed, my team was there for me. I've never had that, any job or any other situation. I was in the military, of course, they don't prioritize you in military. They prioritize the goal. I also worked in retail, which they also don't prioritize you in retail. " Oh, your leg's broken? Well, you know, still have to work the register and stock the shelves." So, this is like the first of my life where there's a institution actually, and the team actually cares for what I need and what my priorities are and they actually help me achieve and work with me to achieve those what I need and what's good for me. -*Ian Vellenga, WM*

I chose this one as what our team embodies and the team I'm speaking of is the Africa team. Embodying prioritizing people, and accountability. I'll first say that we don't do this perfectly, but we're doing it relatively well, we're making our best efforts at it. And I think really, we became galvanized as a group because of the pandemic, whereby we began meeting every week by Zoom. And that's devolved into a bit less frequency of meeting. But in terms of accountability, we went through non-violent communication training last year with Dr. Hooker. And that helped us to process, to think out loud, to verbalize some of the harm even within our team. And it's helped us get to a good place, a better place. I think we're still in process, we're journeying together, but I think I take my hat off to our leadership and some members of our team who really have a vision for helping us develop together and be together and be committed to each other. So I'm grateful. -*Bob Rice, WM*

I serve in Indonesia. For answer number three, I choose prioritize people and accountability because I work with Indonesia with teaching master program. Also, I organize economic grassroot movement in Indonesia, working with poor people so I always make sure that the program, the voices are in the process of implementing. So, we process the voices into the program, and they know what the program we are writing together and what the budget is. And this is very touching because sometimes you have to just wait until they talk about what they want to do. So, I think this is about the methodology that the transparent and the people that we work together will also be involved in the process for making sure that all the process that we plan will be carry out together and they achieve that and we can measure together what the achievement, so in different kind of program. I think this is a basic methodology and I believe that it can bring equality for everybody. Thank you. -*Farsijana Adeney-Risakotta, WM*

[NO RECORDINGS FROM STANZA 3: WE COMMUNICATE WITH CONSISTENCY AND HONESTY]

Think of your closest team of colleagues at PMA. Which of these stanzas does that team best embody with each other? **Stanza 4: We cultivate joy and belonging.**

Mine's not gonna be all about work cuz I'm still a newbie. I'm gonna talk about the team I'm on though. I'm Lawrence Robertson, new administrative support to CPJ in the director's office. And the question posed to think of your closest team of colleagues in the PMA, which one of these standards does that team embody with each other? The reason I chose Cultivate Joy and belonging is because being here three weeks, I feel like I've been here for years because the initiative from the jump from first walking in the building, the security greeted me by my name. Surprised me, expecting me, which gave me joy to be here and to see the smiles of the people. Everyone's so pleasant, they're so warm. Anything we can do to help. And then to have your directors and your colleagues that you've met on Zoom, come to this convocation and be warm and graceful is such a joy in itself to be here. And I'm grateful to be here. And then they give you a sense of belonging, as in they make your family immediately. And in a world that believes in being self-centered, it's important and it's wonderful to have a culture of community. So that's my take. - *Lawrence Robertson, CPJ*

I just was thinking about my closest team, which would be the, the leadership of the Latin American, Caribbean office. And we meet at least every other week on Zoom. And it's just a place that I feel belonging and we refer to each other as familia and so it just that, so that's why I was drawn to this and I think Joy is a byproduct of that, to have that belonging. -*PMA Colleague*

I think about conversations I've had with colleagues or with friends who work in other areas of life, right? And they'll say to me as we're talking about work stuff, they'll be like, you actually like all of your colleagues? I was like, yeah, I actually like all of my, like you don't have any, like, you don't have like a boss who like, that's crazy. Yeah. And I'm like, no, none of that. Like we have a great team. And so I just realized what a gift that is to have and that not everybody in the world gets to experience that at work, which is. Something I, I try to remember that's a gift. The other thing that's striking to me is that we have a lot of joy and fun together, but we've gone through a lot of sorrow too. Like we've had a lot of life happen with the folks on our team. And I think it's really important that to realize that like, really, you can't really have authentic joy without having authentic sorrow together too, right? Like we care about each other, we walk with each other through all the hard things that we're dealing with. And that matters, right? Like, I don't, I never feel like I have to leave my personal life at the door or , at the zoom door when I'm having our meetings, right? That I can name those things because we have like that, that time to check in with each other. And my colleagues genuinely care about those things. And so that's really important to me. -*Michael Gehrling, TFE*

I could say lately, since we've got, in the past three years, had leadership change, but the leadership we have now brought literally the cultivation of joy and belonging that was not there for a long time, which is a joy for my group to experience. And I'm a pastor of an African congregation that is joyful in the worship all that they do. I think the word cultivate is very, very intentional. It's what we do intentionally to cultivate that joy and belonging on a weekly basis. -*Princeton Abaraoha, RE&WIM*

I'm a part of several teams. I wanna speak about theology formation and evangelism. Woo. And There is a great sense of joy and belonging, and all I can say about it is every time we gather the Holy Spirit is present and there's a sense of loving one another, loving the work we do, and caring about one another and caring about the people we serve. And so, there's always, for me, excitement about being with the team that's serving people in so many creative ways, but also enjoying one another. And including one another in ways that make a difference. So I can't imagine being without this team. So that's probably enough. -*Ray Jones, TFE*

I'm associate for Native American Ministries. Cultivating joy and belonging is just loaded with all kinds of things because there's the context of the people in the pews in the 97 Native American congregations we have throughout the country. Their sense of joy is certainly being with one another and all of that. But we also have churches where there's only about five to 10 people that come. And that's, that's what's left. And so, the church says what? I mean, that's not a viable congregation as we say. Why don't they just conglomerate, get all together in one under one roof and all that? And I said, because they've been going to that church since they were children or whatever. Even their families have been going. So, there's a sense of joy that doesn't have anything to do with how many people are sitting in the pews or anything like that, but there's a sense of joy of being together. And sometimes they don't have pastors. So there's a sense of what's gonna happen and that kind of a thing. And then the belonging is, again, contextual as they themselves, they belong to that church, they belong to a tribe, they belong to a family. There's a lot of belonging that goes on there. If you turn both of those joy and belonging into the PMA, the denomination, and those churches, that's a whole nother story. Because there's not a lot of joy in their workings and their dealings with the denomination if and when they have to. It's always about money and you don't have money. And so, we can't do this, we can't do that, and all that kind of thing. And so, my office, we do the best that we can to help them. We don't have a lot of money either, but we do our best. I do my best to try to work with Tim and I and to get them what they need and whatever workshops like that. Before COVID, I used to go and do a lot of workshops in different locations for groups of churches like that. But with that stoppage of us traveling, that created a huge problem because these churches do not have Zoom. They have barely have wifi if it exists on the reservations and they have no computers. So we're trying to figure that out with the ones [computers] that we turn in that are upstairs there or wherever, to see if maybe we can get some of those out to these churches and that I can do some stuff like that. But anyway, there's that, and then the belonging, there's a real disconnect with the denomination. I represent the denomination when I stand in front of them, and so I do not wear a suit. I dress down as it were. So, I definitely don't wear a robe when I preach in front of them and all of that because it's just too white and all of that. So, they're interested. They didn't know, "I didn't know that" and whatever about the church and all those kinds of things, but at the same time there is a disconnect. And so, trying to fix that and make it a little bit more user-friendly, I guess is the best way I can say that is really an important job for what I do with the folks. So, I got my struggles cut out for me. -
Irvin Porter, RE&WIM

I am serving as a young adult volunteer with Vital Congregations with Carlton and Marla and Tony. And before I even signed on to the office a few months ago, with my first call with Carlton immediately felt like I was a part of the team, even though I wasn't. Not yet anyway. But it was just an immediate sense of belonging, and you can tell that they are very passionate and very intense in a good way about like the work that they're doing in the congregations and the presbyteries that they're working with. And even though there's a lot of information that we went through, a lot of training, a lot of slides, there was like no pressure at all to even, like, they were like, there's not gonna be a quiz. Like this is a learning process. And just like kind of calming some of those nerves about having to

know everything about the whole office in like three days. So definitely a sense of belonging there. -
Naomi McQuiller, TFE

So the most immediate team that I work with directly is the Louisville YAV staff. And I think we cultivated a sense of joy and belonging over the years that we've worked together. We have faced some challenging times of going through a pandemic. It's known that young adults aren't exactly in our pews, but we find ways to engage them and do it in a way, in a joyful manner. But not only that, we try to really cultivate a sense of belonging on our team, by not trying to have a, like a higher structure of hierarchy. Although I am the coordinator, I think I empower Bridgette, Deidre, and Champaka to come to me with their issues, their concerns, their complaints, or to even tell me when we need to move in a different direction. And that sense of belonging doesn't just take a switch to develop. It develops by bringing in joy, bringing in those moments of weakness and vulnerability that cause a sense of belonging. And then working with our most immediate team, the young adults that we serve. It's no secret that we are the greatest secret of the Presbyterian church, but what I love about our team is that we are really trying to be more ecumenical in nature and reach out to be more expansive not only to Protestant denominations, but anybody who's really exploring their Christian formation, and also to reach to the global south to have a better sense of belonging. -*Destini Hodges, WM*

Think of your closest team of colleagues at PMA. Which of these stanzas does that team best embody with each other?

Stanza 5: We wrestle with power and privilege.

I think my closest teams of colleagues, I mean, there's several different ministry areas but the closest, because I think all of our ministry areas do this work, right? One of the things about the Presbyterian Church that could be said especially, and I get this from a lot of my kind of non-religious friends, right? That they're really impressed in the kind of work that we do, and they're like, holy crap, we didn't know that. Like you were all like, anti-gun violence. We didn't know that. You know, so they all think that we just, you know hoot and holler. Right. But they're not realizing that wow, you've got mission coworkers, people in other countries. And I think the closest have been folks in CPJ, like Jimmie and so Office of Public Witness, Hunger program you know, PDA, you know, peacemaking. Because we work so closely together, I think what what's been really great about this kind of work is that we kind of complement each other. I think there's a certain amount of like complimentary kind of work that happens, and I think that I have probably learned the most just being involved in, and I'm, again, I'm Alonzo Johnson, self-development of people and I've learned a lot just being involved in these justice ministries. And kind of all the different aspects of them. Jimmie is, for example, Jimmie's out doing the advocacy pieces while many of us are doing things on the ground, or how does disaster connect with justice or unnatural disasters. And so, for me, that has been one of the greatest educations, is to be able to learn from your colleagues. And working with your colleagues and in the kinds of things that we're excited about, right? Especially as we're doing this justice work, which is difficult. It's heartbreaking, it's, it's challenging. It's a struggle. You know, some folks in our church see it as a leftist enterprise, right? They see this as a kind of integrated hole of Jesus' work. So, we need that support. So, we support each other. How do we understand that yeah this is a hard thing. Like we talk about education, you know? You know, we're lamenting with each other. We're finding it difficult to do this. We're seeing pain here; we're seeing hurt here. And think I can share that with not just the folks in CPJ, but I think everybody here and the work that you all do in the areas you all are in, I mean, it's powerful work. It's difficult work. It's tough work. You know,

America's kind of, we're a tough place. And I think that we learn from each other though, and I think it's that and, being able to lift each other in this really hard and difficult work is true discipleship. - *Alonzo Johnson, CPJ*

I'm a Young Adult Volunteer with the, well y'all know I'm with the PCUSA. I'm with OPW. I think this is kind of the point of what we do. So I think like in terms of like which do we best embody with each other, I think, I feel like this is what we are trying to do, you know, in Washington, you know, where there is a lot of power and privilege and just think that doesn't mean that we shouldn't be constantly interrogating how we can do it better, but I think this is kind of the core of what we are doing. - *Lucy McDermott, CPJ*

Especially in this time in period, we really are wrestling with power and privilege. We have divided Congress. The house is Republican. The Senate is Democrat, and we know that. In these timeframes, it's difficult to get things done in Washington, and especially with agreement, even with the things that have to be done and trying to talk about it from a faith perspective congress is not listening in as in ways in the past. They always say things like, we remember you and our hearts and thoughts and prayers are with you, but when it comes down to it, as far as actually listening to the faith community, we're trying to kick down doors in a lot of ways. And especially with the changes in the administrations in the White House over the last 10 years, when Obama was there, we had a lot of access and it was, it was free flowing back and forth. Under Trump we had no access, the doors were shut. But with Biden, he's opened up the doors again, but it's still more one way. They want us to know what they are engaged in. And so, we really are wrestling with power and with privilege to get them to look at the work that they do in a different way from a faith perspective. What does the Lord say? We talk about gun rights and gun violence in this country, and trying to really pull them away from the influence of lobbyists and even their own parties to say that you are a public servant. We want to hold you to that standard. -*Jimmie Hawkins, CPJ*

I'm a Mission Coworker in the Philippines. And I thank you Jim, for giving us that insight. I will speak of it a little bit from a personal perspective of going across a border from a significant church in the world into a context like the Philippines. And the role now that we have of deconstructing colonialism and trying to break it down. I think it is a constant, constant struggle for us to be learning how we do that effectively and how we can engage and be there to empower rather than to disempower our partners. Because there's a tendency that we do come across as an outsider with special wisdom with all the other privileges that that come with Coming from the PCUSA. So, for me, the community of coworkers in Asia are my closest colleagues, and therefore, I believe the struggle that we each have, not to impose ourselves as colonizers, but to really decolonize the whole experience of mission Coworker roles is important. -*Cobbie Palm, WM*

For me, this whole wrestling is also a dance cuz on one hand I find myself in a position where as an Asian woman working in a big organization there is a different sort of configuration of power. And yet as a Filipino woman educated in the US and working for a US church organization in the Philippines, you know, again, that configuration sort of changes. And so how does power with power over power get sort of like in in that flux of things. But I think what I find is that there's just a level of self and organizational awareness that is just so vibrant, so discomfoting, but also just something that is happening constantly. And sometimes you know, sometimes it's in a very healthy, robust, Way in challenging ourselves and our community. And there are times as well where it's sort of like Also leads to some form of disempowerment. You know, like it's always enough, like whose voices we need to bring in the process, who are we silencing as well? So that's why we are good at it, but I think it just provides for a very dynamic flux of things and processes. -*PMA Colleague*

I'm a mission coworker in South Korea, and I think I want to address the question to be clear that I feel like, not that my teams have conquered the questions of power and privilege and figured it all out, but that we seem to be pretty good at wrestling with it and being honest about how we really get it wrong a lot of times, but we keep each other accountable to the extent that we never stop wrestling with it. And especially my regional liaison, Unzu is an older Korean woman. And when I sit down with her and talk about how I am a white, cis hetero male, and a missionary coming in with a legacy of the mission work that the Presbyterian church has done in Korea, which really was teaching about how we should be the ones with power because we're superior. And, then we've created a community that has continued to believe that yes, they are inferior and need to maintain that position of the US and the Christian nation being the superior one. Then what does it mean, am I then called to completely empty myself of all power and privilege, or are there moments? I mean, that's one critique I got from my regional liaison was she said, Kurt, you're not supposed to completely be, have no power and privilege and just be their servant. Sometimes it's necessary to use the perspective that you have coming from the US and seeing how the US has used racism to maintain, for example, US military command authority and power over the South Korean military. That is a moment where your power and privilege as a white cis het male can be particularly useful in dismantling structures of imperialism and colonialism and racism. -Kurt Esslinger, WM

You think about the fact that we benefit, you know, a friend of mine always has this thing. He's Presbyterian. He always says this thing. He says, I wanna be like Oscar Romero, but I like my pension. Right? Yeah. And so, you, you think about these things. And I think about the fact that, you know, I have a 23-year-old who had a baby that doesn't have to pay anything for it, and then I have to wrestle with it, right? Where people who don't have their money, people who are struggling, that they can't afford. So how do we, yeah, I mean, in our ministry areas, I mean, this is the kind of thing that we pushing for, right? Even we are part of one of the richest denominations in the in the world. Right. I mean in the sense that like, yeah, I want my pension. At the same time, at what cost do we get like having a conversation with Rob for, it's like, Rob, we wanna invest buddy, where can we invest? He's like, well, everybody's got a little dirt on their hands. – Alonzo Johnson, CPJ

You can inspire our advocacy though. I've seen exactly what you're saying because I think we have to, it's a definite tension, but like when our son got sick at nine months. He had meningitis and my bills got \$300,000. And my wife had full medical coverage. I had full medical coverage. We paid \$3,000. So that really sensitized me to what people are going through because bankruptcy is still real for healthcare. It inspired me to really speak up for healthcare coverage. That's what you're right, this attention, especially if you take your faith seriously and you struggle with Jesus. -Jimmie Hawkins, CPJ

Think of your closest team of colleagues at PMA. Which of these stanzas does that team best embody with each other?

Stanza 6: We lead with empathy.

I work with World Mission in the Latin America and Caribbean area and our team in Latin America and the Caribbean has been really close. We have a lot of fun together and we are led by Valdir Franca and our regional liaisons and just everyone on our team- we have a lot of love and compassion that we share for each other. And that's been a really valuable thing. And I think that's the spirit, not only with each other, but also in relating with all of the different partners that we work with in our area. Getting to know them, their different needs, their gifts, their strengths, and

challenges they face as well. And on a personal note, I've experienced this and been especially grateful for the empathy and accommodations and understanding that I've received in the last couple of years that I've become a mother and all of the challenges and surprises that that brings on the road. And last year, losing my mother and having some space that I needed to take for grieving. And in the midst of all of that, it's been really important and something I've valued is the empathy in our leadership and in our community. -*Sarah Henken, WM*

I'm with the Presbyterian mission at the United Nations. So, I feel like we've, there's a really, I think Sue Ream, who is my boss, has really established a culture of empathy. I think there is something to be said for female leadership sometimes I do. I do think that makes a difference. Both me and the other Yav who are in our office, we're a very small office. There's only two full-time staff and two yas, and that's it. And we've both been going through some really challenging times. My, my father's diagnosed with terminal cancer. I have lost both grandparents within this year. So, it's been a real season of grief and hardship and I feel like. She has never been one to put targets or put work over people's feelings, but it's giving space to see what works and when you need to work to distract yourself or when you need to take a break. And I feel like we've really, I don't know. I just feel like she has, we have weekly check-ins. We're just always. Having this culture of how are people doing, what can they do better, but what were they, what are they needing from her as well? So I feel like I've really been put in a good spot for this year. -*Emma Johnston, CPJ*

I'm with Presbyterian Committee On the self-development of people. I would say for me by the very nature of self-development of people empathy is something that is very much in the work that we do and also in relating to each other. I have personally had a number of family members that have passed in the past 10 years or so, and I have felt that empathy from my colleagues as well as others within compassion, Peace, and Justice, which is the area that self-development of people is part of. But also, the work that we do in making partnerships with community-based organizations around the country and really globally as well since we fund projects outside the country. I think that in that work of partnership, there is a deep sense of empathy amongst us as a staff because literally we are helping people that are struggling on an everyday basis, and we're helping to change the lives of people in a very real and tangible way. So I would say, to be able to do that kind of work one does need to have a pretty deep level of empathy to do the work well. - *Margaret Mwale, CPJ*

I work in the office of Vital Congregations, and I'm gonna try to talk without crying. That's just my personality. I cry when I'm sad, when I'm angry, when I'm joyful. That's just who I am. But I think in our work amongst the colleagues, the people that I work closest with, we are caring and understanding and hear each other's needs and concerns and respond to them. Sometimes we become brothers or sisters, siblings to each other. Sometimes we become parents to each other to create a sense of family amongst us, which is very important. And in our work to encourage congregations to be a part of the initiative, it's the same thing. We have to be willing to hear and listen and understand what they're experiencing and how they're experiencing. And it's life-changing work. And so I think that because we have a heart and share that heart with others and understand where they're coming from, it makes our work just wonderful. -*Marla Edwards, TFE*

When I think of the closest team of colleagues I work with, it's with the staff who I supervise in the area of global connections in World Mission. And I think that the stanza that is probably best that we embody, I think it is leading with empathy. Kind of caught between the empathy and the teamwork and collaboration, but I think we need to lead with empathy and treat another, with empathy cuz we're humans first, and we're not machines and people have our different life situations they're going through and so, If we can try to put ourselves in one another's shoes and just be kind and exercise

grace with ourselves also and with one another, that's going to make all the difference. And we don't do it so that people can be productive, but I do think it actually contributes to just a healthier work environment. And people can get things done if they feel heard and seen and treated like humans and not machines. So I aspire to lead with empathy and I believe the people that I work with and the people they in turn work with, exercise empathy with each other as well. – *Ellen Sherby, WM*

Think of your closest team of colleagues at PMA. Which of these stanzas does that team best embody with each other?

Stanza 7: We lean into teamwork and collaboration.

I serve as a mission coworker in the area office of the Middle East and Europe. And I think that our area leadership is very encouraging of collaboration within our area and region, which can be diverse, spanning two different continents, but looking for connections thematically, as well as then encouraging us outside of the team to look for other areas within PMA or other opportunities for engagement particularly around people on the move, migration issues and militarism. So those are ways that we've really enjoyed finding opportunities for collaborative teamwork outside of our areas as well. -*Ryan White, WM*

So, I'm a mission coworker serving in South Korea but I'm also a YAV site coordinator for South Korea site. So, I am kind of working in the field in South Korea, but also working collaboratively with the YAV office, which also takes a lot of coordination and also a lot of good communication with them. During the pandemic I think a lot of those were very good opportunities, but at the same time, we kind of lost some communication and some teamwork spirit in my mind that I can rebuild that sort of spirit and how do we get back to having that sort of working together kind of spirit. It is very important for me and also being in this space where I can see all other people, not other than just World Mission. And I see a lot of things are going on that feel to me that there's a lot of opportunity for me to get engaged and get to know other parts of the work that our organization is doing. And I feel like what can I do? In some ways I wanna be involved in some of those things and want to be thinking more creatively and innovatively and thinking about what can I be part of that teamwork that we are talking about. -*PMA Colleague*

I'm the area coordinator for the Middle East and Europe. I've really enjoyed the teamwork in our area. How we communicate with one another, how we plan and strategize together, how we travel together and engage with partners. So, it's been a great collaborative effort. I've also enjoyed working in interagency teams such as the militarism working group, the International Issues working group, the LGBTQ working group. So, these have been amazing experiences for us to share with one another and go beyond the area ministry that we were hired for which is very important in the work that we are doing as a PCUSA in terms of coming together as a whole church to promote the foci of Matthew 25 and to work together on promoting love, justice and all that we are called to do. -
Luciano Kovacs, WM

You Have a lot of Middle East and Europe here. I'm also part of that team. And I think we collaborate in other ways too, like with European partners who are involved in the same areas, there's no ownership here. We work together, we collaborate together. Within PCUSA, across agencies the problems that we're facing are not one space. They are global, and the more we work together, the better we work. There's also work with networks, Presbyterian church networks, and that's helping to bring our congregations along and see what we see, and always with the goal of them taking it back

to their own congregations and using what they've learned to inspire others within their congregations. -*Ellen Smith, WM*

I'm also part of this middle East and Europe office, so you can tell we're embodying this collaborative spirit. It really has been a gift to work together in the ways that we do. And to Ellen's point, I think part of that collaboration extends to our partners. And that has been a real gift to Learn from our partners to see how their insights can impact what we share with PCUSA congregations and constituents and the work with networks, I think has been a really lifegiving piece as well to see how we can work together with partners and in support of our partners' priorities and what they're doing on the ground. I think one area that I'd like to explore further involvement in is within our own organization and the kinds of teams that have been coming together. That's been really encouraging for me to see. I think part of the challenge is time zones and trying to figure out times to meet where we're all, you know, conscious and vertical in, in some form or fashion. -*PMA Colleague*

In terms of teamwork and collaboration, it's been time to build it, you know but I just can't, I can't even imagine not being collaborative, not working together. And I strongly encourage it. And the team that I work with, and I work with different teams, you know, it's concentric circles, right? DEDs, ministry area leaders, teams, we're all working together. And it's really been a blessing because then we can see the gifts that we all have and what we offer to one another. As well as to the church at large. When I look at just PMA, and this is just a small snippet, right, of the Presbyterian Church USA I just believe that we have the power to change the world. We really do. Not just because of our own skills but the power that God has given us. The energy, the power of the spirit. So, we gotta start thinking like that. And some of us already are, but we just wanna amplify that for the entire church to not only just us, but people to come together, to collaborate and to make a difference no matter where we might be on the planet. -*Diane Moffett, Executive Director/President*

I would like to share just an example of collaboration that I saw recently that made me very excited. My name is Lauren Rogers. I Went to APCE in late January, which is a church educators conference. And rather than having booths for each different ministry area, like instead of having a PDA booth over here and a World Mission booth over here in TFE, over here, they created a neighborhood - Mr. Rogers neighborhood and said, you know, where does your congregation, you know, fit in here? Where do you wanna do mission? Do you wanna do it in your community? Do you wanna do it out in the world? And we were able to, we mixed all the resources around, so it wasn't like one ministry area is in one area. And it was, I think, just a really beautiful example of collaboration. All these different ministry areas coming together, not siloed, but working together in God's neighborhood to then resource and empower our congregations and our church educators. So was very excited to see that. And I think that others were really, Enthused by that as well. So, we're hoping that we can take that to other conferences. -*Lauren Rogers, Mission Engagement Support*

I wanna follow up on that because I think historically, sometimes when we would go to conferences, we would go with our particular area, World Mission, CPJ, whatever, but now we go as the Presbyterian Church USA, and then there may be ministries under there, but it's, it's the Mission Agency, whether it's PDA or whatever. So the people can see that we're aligned, and what we offer corporately together. And I think that's a big change for us, and we're still shifting into it. But that's who we wanna be. -*Diane Moffett, Executive Director/President*

I'm in communications. I think my team works well together, that's why I picked this one. -*Jennifer Cash, COM*

I'm a mission coworker in Peru. And I see one of my team members here. I work more in relation with hunger program and the joining HANDS team and we're a group of four, and we are trying to take on these incredibly daunting issues in the world of the global economy and how it oppresses indigenous people that are just a wide range of huge issues that are hard to understand and we just feed one another encouragement and information and energy just trying to learn together. And so, it's a real joy to be with that team. -*Jed Koball, WM*

I'm with PDA and I couldn't do my work without team collaboration, but not only within PDA where I get support from all across the team, but also a major part of my work is with the Office of Public Witness and with the immigration issues office over in OGA. I regularly get people recommending back and forth where, you know, I see something that's outside my range of work, but I know a mission coworker or I know somebody in another agency and vice versa. So I see a lot of collaboration. -*Susan Krehbiel, CPJ*

We are starting up the global visioning process again, and so before where it was only World Mission, it's now a project between OGA and work throughout PMA. We have somebody from every ministry area serving on our global visioning team. And so it's, exciting to actually have a deeper collaborative process. -*Louisa Gallup, WM*

I'm a coworker serving in Africa. Say my, my closest teamwork would be with an Africa team of regional staff. I think despite the challenges that we definitely face and our struggles also with power and privilege, et cetera I think that thanks to having had and having good team leaders allows us to really do some good reflection together including this time of Matthew 25 to reflect on how best to contribute to the larger organizational developments. And I want to emphasize it's thanks to various good team leaders that allowed us to do that. -*Christie Boyd, WM*

I'm a mission coworker in Israel and Palestine. And I think that the issue about leaning into teamwork and collaboration is needed because we need better communication amongst our colleagues and our entities if we're to do our work and to do it well. -*Doug Dicks, WM*

I'm with World Mission. I serve with the people of Haiti. I'm also part of Presbyterian Hunger Program. And I am a part of a smaller gathering that Jed has just described. Teamwork and collaboration is part of joining Hands, which is the part of Presbyterian Hunger program that Jed and I have both been a part of. And I have not lived in Haiti for three years because of the violence there and because of the situation. Though I continue to serve with the people I'm missing out on the joy and the beauty and the energy that comes from teamwork and collaborative work. So now we are part of a new thing and we are innovating a new thing. And that teamwork, that collaboration, that looking at even harder issues, but being a team and bringing people into a team and continuing that collaboration is life giving and heart giving, and it feels like the path that God has put me on personally. And it is just, it is a joy. -*Cindy Corell, WM*

I'm another member of the Latin American and Caribbean mission coworker team. I'm Leslie Vogel, and I serve in Guatemala and Mexico, and we as Latin America and the Caribbean mission, coworkers and regional staff have been working hard these past three years, especially to collaborate with one another. And the teamwork and the collaboration among us is what really keeps me going and gives me life. -*Leslie Vogel, WM*

I'm a mission coworker serving on the US Mexico border. And I'm blessed to be able to serve with a community of folks that's partner with PMA called Frontera Cristo, and that community has welcomed our family in and works really hard to cultivate relationships and understanding across borders and create community. And it's a delight to be working together with that community, and it's just a real joy to see how folks from different sectors of society can come together and work toward a world of more justice, more peace, and more love. *-Mark Adams, WM*

Already a couple of CPJ colleagues have shared, but there's not a single ministry area with whom CPJ colleagues don't currently collaborate as well as outside of PMA and outside of the PCUSA period. And so our work really doesn't go forward without those necessary partnerships and collaboration. And yeah, it's inspiring to see. *-Denise Anderson, CPJ*

Listening to Denise, we collaborate across, like in this, in this circle here with Susan Krehbiel from PDA and with CPJ, we do programs and efforts with the Hunger program, et cetera. And so not just the collaboration within the Latin America and Caribbean colleagues, but also with these other entities. We've done multiple programs and projects and that really has been-- Office of Public Witness-- yeah, yeah. All of it. So wonderful. *-Leslie Vogel, WM*

Think of your closest team of colleagues at PMA. Which of these stanzas does that team best embody with each other?

Stanza 8: We pursue positive impact.

I'm with communications and I believe my team embodies the pursuit of a positive impact because by our nature, we are there to spread the word of the church. And so, You know, we take the whole church and communicate that message out. . And even if we don't realize that we are there, we are pursuing a positive impact. That is kind of the nature of our work. *-Leo Dorsey, COM*

I'm with communications as well, and I write a lot of stories and I was telling the last group. You know, we don't know whether we're having a positive impact or not. On the rare occasion, somebody will send an email and say, I'm giving you know, money because of X, Y, or Z, but chances are, you know, we're not gonna hear about it. We know that we have a positive impact sometimes because while we're talking to an individual, they are so grateful that their work at the church level has even been noticed. You know, sometimes they can't even believe we're getting a call from headquarters. You know, they care about our garden or you know, about their book group or what have you. So in that sense we can see that immediate impact, but otherwise we really never know. *-Darla Carter, COM*

I'm a mission coworker with World Mission and I think that's why we're together. We love Community but we are really bonded together with a a mission in mind to make a positive impact for Jesus Christ bringing the kingdom of God to the world. *-PMA Colleague*

I'm with the young adult volunteers. And I believe that our team as well as our young adults pursue positive impact through the service work that they do. Along with when I go out to different conferences, definitely making people feel like they belong. Actually, there was a person here, she's standing over there. She came up to me and said, "Are you Deidra?: Like her mother-- I was able to meet her, and she was a former mission coworker and I was just able to assist her at the airport and

that relationship actually extended on when I went to another conference in Florida and I was able to meet with her. So just like how you were sharing, you never know the impact that you will have on a person, but staying positive and doing the work of the Lord actually will make a difference sowing those seeds. -*Deidre Allen, WM*

I'm a mission coworker and I also think on one more superficial level, just the fact that all of the other bullet points are really listed as accomplished facts, you know, lead with empathy as something that we have arrived at as opposed to the idea that we're pursuing a positive impact is something that we're always on the journey we're always developing this skill more and more. And also though the fact, as others have said, the idea that, you know, we, we are a self-selected group of individuals that work for World Mission and we work here because we're deeply, deeply committed to the idea that we can make a, a real positive impact in the world, in communities that we love, in others and in ourselves. And, and this idea that this is the reason that we are here and so it reflects as, as something that we continue to work towards. -*PMA Colleague*

Mission coworker from Egypt. We mission coworkers in Egypt have pursued positive impact in the Egyptian church and the Arab world overall for the past 160 years. Thank you. Wonderful. Thank you so much. -*Noah Park, WM*

Think of your closest team of colleagues at PMA. Which of these stanzas does that team best embody with each other?

Stanza 9: We innovate to engage the biggest challenges in God's world.

My wife and I are mission coworkers in Guatemala. We're pretty new in the Latin American Caribbean region, and I think it's a pretty creative group that I, see them trying new things and trying to think outside the box and starting new things. I hear neat stories. So, yeah, I have a lot of respect for the group we're in and they're pretty creative. -*Eric Moe, WM*

The Hunger Program, I think is very committed to working with, listening to our partners. And so, I guess it's, it's an interesting synthesizing process of. You know, seeing how other groups around the country, around the world are tackling, you know, poverty or racism or colonialism and kind of taking what the church believes about these things, but trying to come up with innovative ways that we can kind of bring those voices out or to light to share with others and hopefully engage Presbyterians in that work that our usually non-church partners are doing. So how to get them engaged in community work or advocacy work or building a a new world together. So there, I guess the innovation is trying to, yeah, really listen, really take our cues from our partners, join them and figure out ways to encourage others to join in that work. -*Andrew Kang Bartlett*

I think our group that I work with has incredible creativity and vitality and is willing to meet new challenges. And I'm just really impressed with my colleagues and the ideas we have for living out our calling as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world. If I can add a caveat though, I feel like we often hit the brick wall of PMA that says, no, you can't. And I'm hoping that since this is on our culture code list, we can find ways to encourage PMA to be more open and receptive. And to say, yes you can, yes, we can to these things and not no, no budget organization permission, all those things that we meet right now. -*PMA Colleague*

I think in the new worshipping community world our team is a group of people who are forever saying, well, let's figure it out, or let's try this, or look at what this group of people is trying. And I think that's where the energy comes from for us, is that we are like you, Andrew, engaged with people who are outside of the center of the institution who are already innovating and imagining and trying, and that feeds us, and we want to feed it back in. And so our big challenge is keeping up with the people that we serve because they are out ahead of us in every way, and that's what makes it joyful and energizing and also really hard. *-PMA Colleague*

Mission engagement camp and retreat and Stony Point Center. One of the things working in camp and retreat, there's a lot of creativity and it's a space where you go away, hopefully get some creative and innovative ideas and bring them back. Which is what we've been doing for a long time. So, my question has always been, okay, we've been doing that for a hundred years. Is that the model? Is there something beyond that? So, one of the things I'm excited about with Stony Point Center now is to be able to lean into small, under-resourced or away. So instead of doing, you all come here, and we'll do something together. How do we bring in leaders and then engage with congregations and leaders that are never gonna have the resources to come together. So that we're having that fresh thinking and it's available to everybody, not just those who are able to attend. So that's just one idea, but I'm hoping that that center that we have can be an innovation center for others, but then can also be active in innovating how we use the space. *-Brian Frick, EDO*

I work in Cairo, Egypt. And I'm talking about the region group from PMA that I have the privilege of working with. We're a bunch of missionaries who really do not have a tremendous amount of power or budget. And yet when we get together, we talk about some of the biggest, most intractable problems in the region and think creatively about how we can work with our neighbors, with our partners over there and step into it and to try different things so that the leadership of the regional churches are able to address these problems with creativity, innovation, and energy and joy. *-Darren Kennedy, WM*

Thousand one in worship communities. I know it says here facing the biggest challenges and how we innovate to do those, and sometimes we all immediately think of like all our Matthew 25 initiatives. But I think one of our biggest challenges is helping people belong and understand they have a space of belonging. And I think our leaders in thousand and one do a great job of cultivating space of belonging in innovative ways. Like I think of a community out in Colorado called A Stoked Life, which is based out of a paddle board shop. So, they're creating belonging around a shared passion around paddle boarding, where I think of a community in Atlanta called Ways, which is based out of a gym. And so, they're creating belonging and interaction and participation through taking care of their bodies as well as their spirits. And so, I think Thousand One innovates through those spaces and helps create places of belonging. So, people can come and then experience the love of Christ in those spaces that way. *-Jeff Eddings, TFE*

I work for equipping for mission involvement. I have lots of great ideas. I have wonderful ideas about how to enhance the ministry that I do in order to get more information to PMA about the wonderful work that our mission coworkers are doing. I can pull up numbers, can make spreadsheets. I can do a lot more communications and I simply do not have the time because I am holding at least two hats if not two and a half hats and the work that the mission coworkers do is, is so incredible and so impactful. And I wish that I could sit down with my team and them and talk about other ways that we could communicate and equip congregations and equip them for further involvement. *-Mary Nebelsick, WM*

Question #4: Think of your closest team of colleagues at PMA. Which of these stanzas do you sense this team most needs to grow in?

Stanza 1: We listen first.

I work in the Executive Director's Office where there are a lot of leaders and when everyone is leading it is sometimes hard to stop and just listen. And so that's an area where I think we could do better and figure out ways to take in that input before you jump in to answer the question. - *Barry Creech, EDO*

I work in 1,001 and historically this movement was just really ahead of dreaming, planning, doing, and then saying, oh yeah, you come along with us. Rather than building together with our colleagues and listening to one another. And we have definitely moved past that day and have a different kind of relationship, but still as a group of people, it's like you said, Barry, there's a lot of leaders there. There's a lot of doers. It's a get it. Let's go, let's try it. Let's get something done and we'll figure out what we need to change after we've tried it. But also, I think the question of, to whom are we listening first? I think our team is very engaged, listening outside of the institution to people who are marginalized in the church. And those are the voices that we feel really compelled to respond to. And so that hearing, I think, leads us to want a meeting before we continue to broaden the conversation. - *Nikki Collins, TFE*

And I wonder if those two kind of play together, right? Because EDO's office, there are a lot of leaders and in new worshiping communities, obviously there's a lot of leaders and so that want to do and make a difference and make an impact. I wonder how that plays into the ability to listen and have the space to as Barry said process. -*PMA Colleague*

Well, I will say, can I talk about the church as a whole? Well, it's the ways in which my team is impacted by the church. I do think we're struggling as a denomination and as people of faith with the same issue that the whole country's struggling with. It's listening to one another. We're thinking while others are talking, and right now the political climate in this country does not lead to having a sense of caring about other people's position, and I think our team needs to be sensitive to that because one of the issues that I find that when I go into an area, a presbytery or local congregation, oftentimes the pastor will give me a description of the congregation, make sure that I don't come in with a preconceived agenda and really make a mess of what's going on. And so one of the first workshops that I was asked to do in Virginia when I got into this position was on how do we deal with controversial issues? How do we have conversations in the life of the church that don't bring chaos and disruption in the life of the church? And I think that's legitimate. And one of the things I will say that I instruct my team to do is that we don't use political language when we're talking about our work in congregations. We don't care whether you are a purple congregation or red congregation or blue congregation. I encourage them - let's talk about being a Christian congregation because there are always areas in which, in our work, dealing with justice issues that we can find, areas that we can talk about, especially poverty. Everyone's interested in poverty. The question is, how do we make sure that we are doing it in a way that fits the resources of that church and the needs of that community. - *Jimmie Hawkins, CPJ*

So you're listening to the needs of the church and the community and speaking in a way in which enables them to listen to your message? - *DeEtte Decker, COM*

Very much so, very much so. And, back and forth, also. Again, coming in saying -- I always use the terminology-- we are a resource for you. If there are ways we can help you deal with issues, learn more about different issues, learn more about the different offices, look at us that way. When we leave, you have access to us to be a part of the life of your church. And so always talk about partnership and resourcing. - *Jimmie Hawkins, CPJ*

So, Barry and Nikki have both said that listening is a struggle for the ED'S office and in 1,001. So, I guess my question to both of you all, and I'm thinking about this also for communications, -- is your team, like Jimmy's team, speaking in a way that makes it easier for people to listen. Do we create the space for the team to listen to one another? - *DeEtte Decker, COM*

I think my team is great at listening to one another and the ways that we, the patterns that we have of being together and meeting together and the trust that's built. I think there is a real desire to listen to and seeking people one another. But I think we're also stretched. And so, that was coming to mind as we were talking is how stretched we all are with tasks to accomplish, but how much space is there in our corporate culture to listen and discern, because we have to accomplish and achieve, and form. Where is the space built in for that deeper listening to what we're really called to do, how we're called to do, and how we need to be in it. I also think what you said, you mean about that continual listening, like maybe it's not just listen first, but listen continually and continually check in for feedback and response throughout our processes and work. - *Nikki Collins, TFE*

I think there is a focus that Diane has of listening to Synods, of wanting to go and do these listening visits and get synods together and EPs and hear what's happening there. So that's a more external piece, I think, where there is movement. Internally, I think it's a challenge because EDO is a little different in that there is not a lot of collaborative work that involves the whole group. It's more of a homeroom of people who have different functions, and so when you come together, you're there for morning announcements. You know, you're there to take the role and what's the place in that space of listening and not telling, and that's the piece we have to figure out. - *Barry Creech, EDO*

And I think also part of it's listening to those voices that disagree. You know, we oftentimes, we don't hear from those who are supporting our positions, like the action alerts. But as soon as someone disagrees, oh Lord, and we have to have a conversation on how many of them do we respond to, how do we respond? You know, how long do we respond? Especially if it's getting a little angry. And so, I think that's one of the things we're also trying to make sure we listen to everyone. You know, when someone's disagreeing that we try to explain our position in a way when they understand at least where we're coming from. - *Jimmie Hawkins, CPJ*

And I love the thought behind how much time do we give to the squeaky wheel, so to speak, because there's a tradeoff, right? When you choose to pay attention to the squeaky wheel, you're actually taking attention away from the other. - *DeEtte Decker, COM*

Think of your closest team of colleagues at PMA. Which of these stanzas do you sense this team most needs to grow in?

Stanza 2: We prioritize people and accountability.

I work with the Office of Public Witness and I guess a thing I found about the nature of being a very small office in Washington is that I think we don't really have grassroots capacity and we are like the Washington Office. and so something I wonder a lot about is even though we have a lot of great opportunities to work in partnership with other folks, I do wonder if we are doing the best job we can at centering the voices of the people who are most impacted by our work, and how we can best respond to them and not be imposing our idea of what we need to do. So that's the thing that I struggle with. - *PMA Colleague*

I think the, the team that I'm working with probably needs to grow most in the area of prioritizing people and accountability. I think particularly because the team that I'm working with has been struggling the last years with hurt and pain that had been caused upon one another. And, deep need for reconciliation, for repair, for that. And it really is all about the people and accountability amongst ourselves, and the difficulties we have, dealing with that. - *Jeff Boyd, WM*

I believe that the communications team, you know, people are always growing. And as being part of the communications team, we have to grow with the people and communicate the stories. And you know, sometimes it's hard to communicate, you know, different stories or numbers, so keeping the prioritizing the people, and communicating that message, what whatever it may be , you know, we have to constantly be putting that first because like has been mentioned here, you know, people come first. And I'm part of the web team, which I can get caught up in emails and computer screens. So just really remembering that the work is for people and keeping that first. - *Leo Dorsey, COM*

I was saying that prioritizing people and accountability, and especially prioritizing people over program is just a challenge in the day-to-day work where it's very easy to focus on things that are maybe more measurable or things that are more concrete rather than relationships and the individual people. - *PMA Colleague*

[NO RECORDINGS FROM STANZA 3: WE COMMUNICATE WITH CONSISTENCY AND HONESTY]

Think of your closest team of colleagues at PMA. Which of these stanzas do you sense this team most needs to grow in?

Stanza 4: We cultivate joy and belonging.

Mission coworker in the Philippines. I think, you know, joy comes from a very deep sacred place where it's sort of like a culmination of love and kindness not joy that is sort of like just, you know, sort of comes out of, in other words, not a vacuum. But I feel, as a, you know, world mission, but also with the YAVs, we wrestle with a lot of, like, I was coming from wrestling with power and privilege and it's, it weighs heavy on the spirit. And these are not difficult, you know, and I think we are good in that. But I feel that the practice of bringing it to a place of healing, a place of joy and a

sense of amidst all of these divides, amidst all of this strife that, you know, we can genuinely be a community and, you know, children of God. I think we still need to carve out the space and the journey and the process to get to that. And in the meantime, it just weighs heavy. And, so the mirth, you know, I don't feel as much of that. And that's from a very personal sort of space. – *Dessa Palm, WM*

I like the word cultivate, because it really takes cultivating and more and I don't mind saying, because Denise is here, and she was my director at one time. One of the things that she brought to my ministry area was this sense of art, which I think she's gonna be doing later on. Which really is, a cultivating process and start with a blank canvas and you just, what emerges, and I think scriptures tell us about in the presence of God, there's a fullness of joy. So it's like, it's like cultivating, allowing, allowing, the spirit, to rule that space and that takes some real processing of self. And so, I think for all our areas we need to really cultivate that sense of presence of God and joy. - *Michael Moore, RE&WIM*

So, when I look at cultivate joy and belonging, I feel like in the Hunger program, the belonging thing, I think we do better probably. I think we all feel like we belong and we're part of a team. But the joy thing is maybe more of a challenge. And part of it is that like many of my colleagues, we're working on really kind of difficult, heavy issues with partners and populations that are faced with just intense challenges and think sometimes we get caught up in the intensity of the world and even when talking in this building and beyond just hunger program staff getting caught up in the grievances of structures and systems of the institution we work for and how that kind of can become a barrier to, I think, what you're speaking to, experiencing spirit, experiencing joy and being open to miracles. - *Eileen Schumann, CPJ*

I work with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. I started working here in June of last year. So I've been here about eight or nine months now, and at least within this PMA space within the larger PC(USA) staff, I haven't felt any attempts to cultivate joy or belonging. Often, times when I introduce myself to other colleagues to build connections, it's a brief hello and a turnaround to another conversation, often with someone who is much higher ranking with me or than I am. And that's hard for me because I believe, and I want to believe at some level we are all here because we are called to be, and we are called to this because something about the work that we do does spark joy. And I think that those moments of joy are there individually and often, at least in my ministry, they're few and far between. Often, in my less than a first year as a staff member, I have been confronted by the institutional patriarchy with volunteers speaking negatively to me with several instances among colleagues as well. I think the joy is there. We need to find ways not just to cultivate it from nothing, but to celebrate the joy that is already there, meaning how do we celebrate the joys that our other coworkers have as well? For me, one of my joys has been designing a new commissioning liturgy for volunteer host sites. And Rich very generously came alongside me in that to help tell that story and cultivate that joy. And I don't think that that's just a communications job, but I'd love to see all of our departments find ways to celebrate that joy together that is already in existence. I think belonging is a harder thing to do, and I think it's one of those things that is gonna take intentionality over time because it's not a quick fix, it's not an easy thing to adjust. I mean, I have been Presbyterian my whole life. I was very conservative, evangelically PC(USA) as a child and came into this office and didn't know anybody, didn't understand the structures. I'd never been to Montreat until I worked there at age 23. I think this is a hard system to break into, and so not just for people who are already a part of the system, but how do we bring in these new folks who have never interacted with this system before in ways that bring them in rather than exclude. - *Nell Herring, CPJ*

Just a book recommendation. Barbara Ehrenreich has a new book called *Dancing in the Streets A History of Collective Joy*. And there's a wonderful history of Christian ecstatic dance collective effervescence, kinda taking the traditions of Dionysius into our own traditions, and then Rome smashed them hard in the 15th, 16th century. But that's part of all cultures and all religions, and it's something we need to bring back. - *Andrew Kang Bartlett, CPJ*

Yeah, I just wanted to say, Nell, thanks for sharing that. That was really vulnerable. I just think some of the stuff we're facing is so hard that it's tough to find joy. It kinda zaps. In one of the times here I heard somebody say, you know, do you see resources first when you look at people? Or do you see needs? And I think the needs are smothered. You know, it's hard to see maybe the gifts or the good, so that definitely zaps joy. And the other quickly, Nell, you inspired me, but I think there's some bitterness in the colleagues I work with, and it's toxic and it makes me think, do I want to engage? Do I want to, how can we turn this ship, I mean, the Titanic is going and how do we, it's tough. It's really frustrating. Wanting to be a positive, joyful force in that is hard. - *PMA Colleague*

That sparked something for me. I was talking to another younger, newer hire yesterday, and that person said to me, does anybody actually like working here? Because I think that the conversations that we're having here, there is a lot of necessary lament for how things have been. And how do we honor that lament without letting that be the overhanging narrative throughout this whole event. - *Nell Herring, CPJ*

And it seems like there's change and that's exciting. - *PMA Colleague*

I think we have to kind of go back, but if I had to say anything, I'll just be honest with you, as a person that has an entirely kind of racial ethnic staff, we have not felt recognized. We have been ignored. There have been times where we have been, our work has been pushed aside. I think a lot of it is because we're all black and brown people. And the one white person we do have on our staff is Russian. And I think people don't like to admit it. They don't want to deal with it, but there's racism in our building. And for us, and I know for me, especially being in this church, I'm a Presbyterian minister in this church, a pastor in this denomination. And the disrespect which we get that no one realizes, and in so many ways, it makes us back away from folk. And a lot of this is anger at a previous director. Right? And so, we get ignored. We're treated as if we don't know what we're doing or as if our work is not as important. And I hear this right, and I think this is unfortunate, but it's real. And I think a lot of this is part of white supremacy culture. It just is. And there's no other way I can really explain it. I see it. I hear it. I, we experience it and when we experience it, you know, my people are quiet. Right. You know, we're quiet, but we know, we hurt from it because we feel we're not as important. I have never felt so much less important in my life than working in this place. - *PMA Colleague*

Right. So, I came in in 2020 and I felt it immediately coming here and I've had to process through it over the last year since I've been here. And so it's a very real dynamic that needs to be addressed. Cause new people coming on can be just crushed in the midst of all of this. - *PMA Colleague*

I was in this group earlier too for what we struggle with personally. And I think I tend to just sort of treat work as work, and I come to get the job done and then go home. But I also think that just the work that my colleague and I do is tough work. We're talking to companies that don't wanna change, don't wanna come into alignment with Presbyterian values, so just having that constant fight with sort of very small incremental wins can be, demoralizing at times. - *Katie Carter, EDO*

I was also here during the individual struggle. Like my colleague Katie, the work that we do doesn't lend itself well to belonging. So, we need to kind of be accepted in a lot of different spaces, in a lot of different ways. We don't really belong anywhere, so it's a challenge for us to continue to kind of find the joy in the very small incremental wins that we see sometimes on these very heavy topics with difficult, difficult institutions to move. - *Rob Fohr, EDO*

My colleagues all work abroad in World Mission, and I watch them help to create places of joy and belonging with their partners and yet when you're of two cultures, you're never quite belonging to either. And so wherever they are, they're missing the other part of their belonging. I also think that as an organization, we are trying to discern how to help our mission coworkers belong in the spiritual sense, belong with us, and we have not yet reached cultivating joy with them. - *PMA Colleague*

I serve in Zambia. Before I went to Zambia, I was told that we would become "between people." We wouldn't belong where we left from, and we wouldn't really belong where we went. So that I think is one of the biggest challenges. There is joy. But I think as a team, we also need to focus more on our joy and belonging as a team rather than just on our individualistic joys and become a greater part of the team of world Mission rather than just within ourselves. And again, the Africa team has dwindled and so there's fewer of us to belong to. So we need to become more belonging in the whole bigger part of World Mission. - *Melissa Johnson, WM*

in particular, the way I relate to our regional liaison, we find we're often mired in frustration and disappointment and trying to connect the work that our partners especially one of our partners, ecumenical council, is doing to try to break free from, for example, US Imperial Control and perpetuation of conflict and perpetuation of a state of the Korean War. And so we see them trying to do so much to lift up their voices with dwindling resources among themselves. And so their disappointment then becomes our disappointment. And then we also face the ongoing problem of US foreign policy that also continues to believe that we are supposedly the good guys and that we need to perpetuate this war in order for good to happen and to constantly see our requests and our advocacy hit a brick wall. Then cultivating joy becomes so much of a struggle in and of itself. And trying to make sure that at least we have some sense in ourselves of belonging to a struggle that is good. But even the belonging in that becomes difficult when the struggle itself becomes so frustrating. - *Kurt Esslinger, WM*

I'm a mission coworker serving in Honduras. And co-signing on what Rachel said, I feel also... I'm single and I work alone. I don't have a team in my country of service, so it's an effort to cultivate for myself that sense of belonging. I do feel I'm between cultures, like all of us who live in cultures not our own. And then I also struggle, I have felt more than ever in the past two years like part of a team working regionally in Latin America and the Caribbean and that's been really joyful. But we also, as a team, I think, have struggled cultivating that joy. I think I'm starting to suspect because we have not addressed the long trauma and hurt that we've experienced. And I think when we're constantly in that survival space, it's very hard to cultivate joy. And so, even though I do feel joy seeing them and working with them, it is hard when we're frustrated and hitting brick walls and feeling like we haven't addressed past issues and the trauma that we, by nature of our work live through or experience secondarily in the places where we live. It's very difficult. So I think that's where the challenge is for me. - *Dori Hjalmarson, WM*

Think of your closest team of colleagues at PMA. Which of these stanzas do you sense this team most needs to grow in?

Stanza 5: We wrestle with power and privilege.

This may be a personal bias, but this was my own personal struggle as well. So it may be that that's just what I see. But being in the communications department, our main job is to be collaborative, a team player. And sometimes it's hard to see the biases that we may have because our job is so specific that, you know, we are the experts in our fields, and we go into a lot of meetings with that in mind. And it's hard to sometimes look past that when you just sort of walk in with that mentality with blinders on to, you know, realize that the opinions of the client or the person that we're working with on a particular job are just as influential to the success of that project as maybe the plan that we make for them. - *Mark Thompson, COM*

I serve as a mission coworker in Costa Rica, and our Latin American Caribbean team is asking a lot of questions about power and privilege. I'm here because we always need to do more and look deeper and develop better analytical tools about what we're talking about and not be satisfied with superficial definitions. And also, we really, really, really, really, really, really, really need to listen to our partners around the world on this. - *Karla Koll, WM*

This is very important and always hard topic to talk about. I work with the young adult volunteer program and a lot of young adults coming from U.S. are, I would say, from very privileged backgrounds. Them knowing themselves, where they're coming from, and also me as a Korean person living in Korea also comes in with privilege and power as well. How do I juggle those things and how do I challenge in loving way the young adults to see their power and privilege even played in the place that they are not even a majority. So it's kind of hard for me it's kind of a learning Experience for me to work with the young adults, mostly white, young adults within the context of them being a minority, but also still sort of having them be aware of their own power and privilege even within that sort of environment and also being aware of my own privilege and power working for the PC(USA) in Korean context. In some ways, I feel like I'm coming with a privilege. Like even though I'm a Korean, I'm a woman, , I'm a minister in a Very, could be a very minority perspective, but also like, so it's kind of very complicated. Like how do you think about yourself? Are you a margin, are you or not? Are you, do you have a power and privilege is, is something that I always think about and challenge myself and the people that I work with. - *PMA Colleague*

Working on the continent of Africa as an African American, I recognize the privilege that I carry, but I feel that sometimes members of my team don't recognize it or refuse to acknowledge it. And I think that becomes something that We need to grow in. I think that's an area that, and I'm not sure what the answer is for that, but I think that it's important that if white Americans go to the continent of Africa, that they understand the history of that country with America and acknowledge that part of that history, that history of colonization could be carried just through their presence. And to acknowledge that, not that you can change color or you can change the past, but just the acknowledgement of something leads to the change in attitudes and mindsets. - *PMA Colleague*

In all of my training in social justice, in some different parts of training, I learned that racism equals power and privilege. And so if our team doesn't wanna lean into that, we're trying to eliminate it within our team. Then there's a lot of racism that is controlling the team. - *PMA Colleague*

I'm a mission coworker Philippines. And the issue here is where we need to grow in as a team. And I had mentioned that my closest team is really my fellow coworkers in Asia. And as we go out into the world, the immediate response of the partners when we go there is that you are a leader, because we do come from a privileged church and they look at me and they say, you look privileged in your education and life. And so the constant challenge for all of us is how do we move out of that constant, Way in which we are received. And to do it carefully because sometimes they do need, in certain circumstances where security is at question, they need us to stand up to the military or to oppressive structures because we do have some international immunity. So at certain points you feel like you don't wanna hide behind everyone, but at the same time, you don't wanna present yourself. As somebody who is, arrogant over or who is irrigating all power, because you do come from, a privileged church and institution. So that work is constantly important for us to do. - *Cobbie Palm, WM*

I just feel like the YAV program hasn't had its reckoning yet with the privilege that it takes to be a YAV and I think it's incredibly frustrating that were trying to do the YAV program. It's not diverse...not economically diverse and the only way that my friends and I have been able to live in New York City on 500 a month has been through when I've had health issues my parents have had to say have had to step in and send me money because I couldn't afford the copay. I recognize my privilege there because I have parents, I have a support system, that said, "we're not going to let you not go to a doctor's appointment". I recognize the privilege and I recognize that it's pushing people out from the YAV program. The YAV convocation was majority white, majority middle the upper class, and they have those abilities to raise money. You have to raise a certain amount of money [to fund your own YAV year] and how do you raise the money? It's easier when you've got this church network - typically white wealthy churches are the ones that have the funds – that says, "hey we'll fund your YAV year". I feel like we're not addressing these gaps. I recognize how much I have struggled this year to make ends meet and I realize I have always had that safety net that other people have not. Other people might have had to go home had they had the health issues that I had. I'm being very blunt but the program has not supported [us/me/YAVs] you're just left high and dry. I think we gotta do better to support everyone and really recognize the privilege that it takes to be a YAV. So that's my two cents. -*PMA Colleague*

Think of your closest team of colleagues at PMA. Which of these stanzas do you sense this team most needs to grow in?

Stanza 6: We lead with empathy.

I'm serving in South Sudan, and the team I'm identifying with is our Africa team serving in all of Africa. And this is a hard question for me to answer, which is the most need for growth because overall, I think we are an empathetic group. It's been my personal experience that I've had myself has been one of empathy even since we've been here. People have paid attention to my needs, and I've been grateful for that. So, I've experienced empathy. We are a diverse team racially, and there have been times, even within the last few days, where I feel like our empathy muscle for certain marginalized persons could be strengthened. So that's maybe why I'm responding to this particular question in this way is because we're a diverse group racially, I've experienced sometimes what feels to me like a lack of empathy for a certain person's experiences and perspectives, which for me is heartbreaking. And I recognize that I can be as guilty of that lack of empathy too. But it's an area of growth, continued growth, I would say. - *Bob Rice, WM*

So, just let me give you a story for these few minutes. I don't want to take the time. Yesterday, there was a lady in my former church, they discovered a spot of cancer in her stomach. Very serious. So I wrote to her, praying for you habibti. Habibti means to a little girl, like, tomorrow will be passed and you will look behind you and smile. In the same time, the difference between empathy and sympathy is very important to me. Sympathy is not nice. Sympathy is pity. I could have changed this word to be pity. Poor girl, I'm praying for you. That is sympathy. What I wrote is empathy. I think so. This is a root for many of the coming points that is written here. If you work with empathy, you will provide joy and teamwork and many of the things that is written in the nine points. Empathy, understanding, and I am with you. I understand you. I am with you. By the way, lastly, Middle Eastern office is the poorest. My constituencies are the poorest. They appreciate the grants. 90% of them don't have full-time salary. So, you can understand. But if I pity them, they won't work with me. If I empathize with them, they will appreciate it. - *Magdy Girgis, RE&WIM*

I'm serving memorial mission on the US Mexico border. I think the challenge that we have in terms of growing in empathy as opposed to sympathy is How to navigate the vast power dynamics that exist both culturally, economically, socially, and how to navigate those and to create community across all of those borders so that there is true empathy as opposed to sympathy. And I think that's a huge challenge we have to figure out how to navigate. - *Mark Adams, WM*

As, as a mission coworker, I viewed this from the perspective of looking at the closest team within World Mission with the area office with which I work, not, the partners. And I recognize that as individuals, as an area, I think we excel at having great empathy for our partners that are where we do ministry and we're really challenged at having empathy within the area office and within World Mission for our colleagues that we work with here. - *PMA Colleague*

Think of your closest team of colleagues at PMA. Which of these stanzas do you sense this team most needs to grow in?
Stanza 7: We lean into teamwork and collaboration.

I think the challenge for the team that I supervise in Global Connections is teamwork and collaboration. Because I'm relatively new to the position - I'm in since last April and discovering more kind of some of the parameters of what I think I can do. And I feel like the teams that I supervise are collaborative generally, but there's a greater opportunity for us across the whole area of global connections. Which includes the area offices and World Mission and some offices that engage Presbyterians and resources and in connections and training between mission around the world and people who live in the United States who are interested in mission. So I think there's a greater opportunity for teamwork and collaboration that I can help facilitate. And I'm excited about that. So that's a challenge and an excitement. - *Ellen Sherby, WM*

I think our team has an incredible spirit of teamwork and collaboration. But it seems like more and more we're not encouraging it, we're discouraging it cuz it feels like in the past there was a lot of sharing of stories, but now it's more and more "fill out this form for permission," "How are you meeting this objective?" It almost feels like we're becoming more cogs in a wheel or something, being told what to do rather than really

working as a team and, and sharing the stories of how God is working. So I see this on the list and I hope we can grow into it cuz I think it's, yeah, it's not always there. - *Josh*

I work with the ministry at the United Nations and we are a small office. We are an office of two. We have two wonderful YAVs. But I think having just two people and a lot of work to get done just with us two, it's hard to, you know, be able to collaborate cuz we're doing so many different things. But also I've learned coming into this office, this is like about three and a half, four years in, we weren't collaborating and working together in a way that I think sometimes was healthy with other people, and we're slowly becoming, you know, more collaborative and working together. I can think specifically, we just did the Commission on the Status of Women, and we work alongside PW, RE&WIM. And it is a slow process of, you know, coming together as different ministries to collaborate. And we see the beauty and the importance and the need for it, but we're still growing. We're still learning. And I'm hopeful that we can get better at it cuz we need to get better at it and to be able to connect and collaborate in different ways within different justice teams and things that we do within the office. - *PMA Colleague, CPJ*

I'm a mission coworker, serve in Indonesia. And I think I like to grow more on the teamwork and collaboration. Maybe this is the time, because I think everybody already ready for that. Because in our ease of the organization already have the same perspective of how organization runs so we can work together once we are in the same platform. I think it's easy. So I'm glad that I will emphasize on that. And my challenge for working a team and collaboration is to plan something that more real for everybody can achieve. That is challenging, and I don't know how to start with that. We have to think about what actually the people need for our, our collaboration. *Farsijana Adeney-Risakotta, WM*

Just briefly, I think the challenge is because for mission coworkers, our primary colleagues, our church partners, and the local colleagues in the places where we serve. And so trying to focus on that ministry, but also among PMA colleagues, I think there's a lot of opportunity for teamwork and collaboration and learning, but how to balance those two when you feel like your focus is on the ground where you're working. So I just feel like it's a growing opportunity or edge, so to speak, of greater collaboration. - *Kristi Rice, WM*

I'm a mission coworker in Taiwan. And the need for leaning into teamwork and collaboration resonated with me because in our Asia-Pacific meetings before the convocation started, we realized how some of us are working on similar issues but haven't been sharing with each other. And even though we do all work in very different contexts, we could also be sharing more and collaborating with each other. *Emily Seitz, WM*

The thing that resonates with me about teamwork is that here in this convocation was the first time as our team that we went around and had an opportunity to actually explain a little in depth about what each one is doing, and that helps creativity, et cetera, et cetera. Another thing on the umbrella organization that there's so much good stuff happening in Congo that would really apply here in the United States. And so that collaborative back and forth, it needs to be worked on. - *Jose Lamont Jones, WM*

I work with World Mission in Latin America and the Caribbean, and I was thinking about our local Latin Caribbean team about this, that we do a great job of discussing a lot of things together, but I think sometimes that our leadership wraps it up and is like, okay, now we're gonna go finish doing the actual work by ourselves. And I think some of us would like to continue to participate in the full process and not just the discussion, but also all of World Mission feels like we just get more and more hierarchical and add new layers, which sometimes could be a good thing, cuz actually our newest associate director or whatever you're called, Ellen, has been really amazingly communicative and helpful and supportive to us. So that's been a great thing. But in general, like the structure just seems like, and we've got our director and our associate directors and our coordinators and our regional liaisons, and then those of us who are off in different corners of the world are like this bottom rung of sometimes getting information, sometimes not getting information. There aren't that many of us anymore. We used to be a lot more, so maybe it was just for practical reasons, we couldn't all participate sometimes in some of these things, but I think there's a lot more room for collaboration and teamwork than we've been taking advantage of and hoping we can flatten our own World Mission House as we might be combining with other offices in different ways. It would be really exciting. - *Sarah Henken, WM*

Think of your closest team of colleagues at PMA. Which of these stanzas do you sense this team most needs to grow in?

Stanza 8: We pursue positive impact.

I work in communications, and I chose Pursue Positive Impact because sometimes we go on autopilot to get our work done and we need to step back and see why we're doing this work and who's affected by it and who's consuming it. - *Jennifer Cash, COM*

I don't really think that we're not pursuing positive impact, but we work in a tough part of the world, middle Eastern Europe. We have the Ukraine War, we have Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, palestine, Israel. And it's hard. We have to work to maintain hope and recognize that hope is in the little things. The big things are hard to see sometimes and not easy to replicate, but you can replicate the little things, and you have to hold onto the little things and stay positive in yourself. And some days that's just plain hard. - *Ellen Smith*

Is it through the partnerships that you're able to maintain hope? - *PMA Colleague*

Yes. The little things that people do to care for one another. The hard work they're doing to work with the refugees. But you know, one of my partners told me recently when I was in Ukraine, He's learned to argue with God using the Psalms. He withdraws into a room and shuts the door so that he can weep too. They're carrying a lot. It's not about me, that's for sure, but they do give me hope in the midst of their grief, my grief, what do we do? So we keep going forward with one another in partnership. And we share the stories where we can. - *Ellen Smith, WM*

Think of your closest team of colleagues at PMA. Which of these stanzas do you sense this team most needs to grow in?
Stanza 9: We innovate to engage the biggest challenges in God's world.

I think our team needs to wrestle with how we can innovate and engage the biggest challenges in God's world, but I feel like a lot of times we get so bogged down with the day-to-day responsibilities and trying to put out fires or picking up extra projects that others have, you know? And so I would love the opportunity to be more creative and innovative. And I just wonder how we can find the time if it means that we have to put aside a different project that we're working on so that we can be more creative and innovative and just decide maybe this needs to go, maybe this isn't the year for this, and we try to do something different. -*Stephanie Caudill, WM*

We're doing new things in our world mission area of Latin America and the Caribbean, and I also work with Presbyterian Hunger Program, Joining hands. And through joining hands, there are two mission coworkers and there are a number of networks. So, we are doing new things and the reason that I chose this -- the challenges to innovate --well, we are innovating. The problem is if we think we've innovated, we can stop innovating. And I think it's a delicate balance to get on the road and continue the work, but to always make time in your workflow and in your schedules, and to remind one another, let's daydream a little bit more and get back to it. I'm excited about the center of innovation. The fact that that exists is inspiring and I appreciate that so much. But don't just innovate once. We're always gonna be on the move. -*Cindy Corell, WM*

I'll try to find the words. I believe this innovate to engage the biggest challenges in God's world, the formulations were first a little bit different. They used "create" or "creative." There was used "imagination." Innovation starts with imagining something different. What I have found challenging, and I, prefer the word "imagination" above "creating." Creating seems like an individual action. Imagination requires that you can also imagine what other people imagine. And that has been, I find, the challenge that if you have different ideas that go outside of the ordinary things, or that maybe look at larger overarching things and not the isolated local things, I have found it challenging for others to catch the image. I personally have felt that that is a challenge. So that's why I pull in still the term imagination also, when we're talking about innovation and I think for our team that's a challenge because we're so used to doing things as, as. Because our role is also very complicated. We were, we're dealing with global partners. We're dealing with congregations in the US so anything you imagine does need to fit that larger picture too. -*Christi Boyd, WM*

I am with Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People. One of the things that I'm really looking forward to with regards to the future, or even presently, looking at areas to innovate is

with the Center for Innovation that is being talked about. That's something that I'm really looking forward to, but also looking at what we do, and when I say we, I'm talking about Compassion, Peace, and Justice. I think there are some really good areas that, especially in recent years, we have tried to find natural collaboration around and to find ways that we can be innovative. And in particular, I would say the one greater of sharing ministries. Part of it being that that is a natural bent in the work that we do, whether it is community development or it's addressing poverty and hunger and the root causes of poverty, or it's dealing with disasters. We've been able to do some really good things together in recent years, but also, I'm thinking of innovation even beyond that. When we look at mid councils, we look at congregations where are the gaps? What could we be doing even beyond what we're presently doing, and then frankly, even in communities, how can we as PC(USA), be able to stand out more so that the larger community can see the good work that PC(USA) is doing and the many, many ministries that are part of PC(USA), the different entities as well. And so that might include for example, forming some partnerships maybe with some of the community-based organizations around here. What can we do in the Louisville area, for instance, to address some of the systemic issues that we know are a huge problem, and that's something that we've been having conversations around. So really excited at the prospects of what is to come and what we continue to do. Thanks. - *Margaret Mwale, CPJ*