The Indigenous Reformed African American Movement in the PCA

Over the past 5 years of ministry with the MNA, I have been humbled to witness the accelerating development of an indigenous and reformed movement among African Americans resulting in ever increasing numbers of people coming to faith in Jesus Christ. I believe it is a modern day reformation of faith and hope. My desire is to see God glorified and the PCA blessed by revival and I’m convinced that African Americans play a crucial part. At present, we are not yet well represented throughout the PCA. Presently out of our more than 4,000 Teaching Elders, just over one percent is African American.

“Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” -1 Corinthians 12:14, 21, 27.

The PCA needs an Indigenous Reformed African American Movement

An Indigenous and Reformed movement is a way of acknowledging God’s special love for His People not just as individuals but also as a people. This movement is indigenous in that although it originates from a European sentiment as articulated by Martin Luther and John Calvin; yet it recognizes African American values, forms, and styles. The Reformed faith simultaneously guards us from mere cultural appeasement, yet positions us to boldly pursue reconciliation and peace across racial lines as we are being renewed by the Word of God.

Dr. Michael Horton wrote on the subject of Semper Reformanda in a 2009 TableTalk article.

“It is not because the culture is always changing and we need to be up with the times, but because we are always in need of being re-oriented to the Word that stands over us, individually and collectively, that the church can never stand still. It must always be a listening church. ‘Faith comes by hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ’ (Rom 10:17).”

The PCA and the African American community both stand to benefit from this movement. As African Americans and other minorities enter the Reformed movement in increasing numbers, the body of Christ, as represented by the PCA, experiences further reformation.

6 Strategic Initiatives for 2015 – 2020

In order to help further the development of an Indigenous and Reformed movement and increase the presence of African Americans in the PCA I would like to introduce six new initiatives. It is my prayer that with your financial help we will see God work among us to make the PCA a denomination that reflects the Glory of God in the body of Christ.

1. RUF at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Reformed University Fellowship (or “RUF”) is the campus ministry of the PCA, which has proven to be one of the most effective ministries in the PCA for reaching and mentoring college students as well as developing PCA pastors and church planters. Since the start of RUF at Jackson State, a historically black college and university (or “HBCU”), hundreds of African Americans have been introduced to Reformed theology, expositional preaching, and the PCA. Presently, the PCA has 3 RUF’s ministries at HBCU’s. There is a great opportunity to reach African Americans by planting more RUF’s at other HBCU’s all over the country. With your help we can start RUF on other HBCU campuses and provide funding for RUF internships.

2. The Leadership Development and Resource Weekend

The Leadership Development Resource (or “LDR”) weekend began 2011 when several African American, Covenant Seminary students, desired to investigate the PCA. I invited them to New City Fellowship (or “NCF”) in Chattanooga to show them about the African American presence and history in the PCA. This event has metamorphosed - now providing education, fellowship, and ministry exposure to many African Americans across the country, inside and outside the PCA. The LDR weekend has gathered young people who desire to be mentored while they think about seminary and ministry in the PCA. With your support we hope to provide scholarships, housing, and transportation for our next annual conference which will be held Labor Day Weekend 2015 in Jackson, MS.
3. African American Leadership Initiative

The Gospel is indisputably at work bringing racial reconciliation in Jackson, MS, despite the history of racial issues and conflict. This became especially evident after the start of Redeemer Church, a cross-cultural PCA church started in 2004. Redeemer in partnership with an RUF is reaching an increasing number of African American students attending Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS). RTS created the African American Leadership Initiative (or “AALI”) which seeks to capitalize on the unique ministry opportunities in Jackson. The goal of AALI is to train those interested in the Reformed tradition to spread the gospel faithfully and in such a way that it continues the work of bridging communities across racial and socio-economic lines. The AALI is available to anyone, but particularly to full-time African American seminary students demonstrating leadership potential who are pursuing an MDIV or MA degree. Through multiple platforms, members of AALI will learn how to apply the Gospel to the unique challenges and circumstances of ministry in a multi-ethnic or urban context. With your help we will be able to fund mentoring events and conferences for the benefit of our RTS students.

4. African American Church Planting Initiative

Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research, said, “We have conducted large national studies on church planting in the past. But it would be wrong to assume that national factors are the same for every sub-population of church plants.” A national study measured and identified characteristics of healthy church plants juxtaposed with those belonging to an African American context. The African American Church Planting Initiative (or AACPI) was created to provide contextualized church planting training that deals specifically with the national factors of minority cultures. The AACPI held its first event in Nashville, TN in August 2014. The event addressed two areas: cultural intelligence and contextualization in African American church planting. We wish to support this initiative by providing for future conferences that educate and equip church planters. With your help we hope to be able to fund future conferences.

5. The R.I.S.E. Initiative

R.I.S.E., was started by TE Alex Shipman at the Village Church, a cross-cultural PCA church in Huntsville AL. R.I.S.E. is an acronym that stands for [Recruit. Internships. Spiritual Maturity. and Equipping..] It is an intentional and proactive initiative on the forefront of recruiting a coalition of churches and students for the purpose of training and preparing minority ministry candidates for ministerial service. This training and preparation will be done by focusing on three areas for candidates: Internships, Spiritual Maturity, and Equipping for ministry. Alex would like to see this program utilized by other PCA churches, particularly those headed by an African American pastor. With your help we can fund the start of R.I.S.E. program at other PCA churches.

6. The African American Presbyterian Fellowship

The purpose is of the African American Presbyterian Fellowship (or AAPF) is two-fold: 1) to provide a context for fellowship, exhortation, and strategic planning and 2) to be the head, the heart, and the hands of the African American presence in the PCA. The AAPF will provide a centralized hub of resources for agencies, committees, presbyteries, and local churches for the PCA to do ministry with and among African Americans. The AAPF will work towards relational, theological, and denominational synergy among all African Americans within PCA. The AAPF will encourage African American participation in and support of the presbytery, PCA’s standing committees and agencies, and the General Assembly. The fellowship will provide support to African American teaching elders and their churches and recruit, mentor, and coach African American seminary students who show an interest in joining the PCA. With your help the AAPF can become an effective network for helping to facilitate an indigenous reformed movement among African Americans in the PCA.

“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” – Revelation 7:9-10.
WE SEEK YOUR PARTICIPATION AS A TEAM MEMBER IN THIS VITAL MINISTRY

➢ Please join with us in praying that many people will find hope in Jesus Christ and lives will be changed.
➢ Pray for the PCA, that we will truly realize that the PCA needs the African American community.
➢ Pray for the African American community that can greatly benefit from this ministry.
➢ Pray that a growing number of African Americans will be called to serve as PCA leaders.
➢ We ask that you prayerfully consider participating with us through your financial support.

WILL YOU HELP US RAISE $100,000 BY ADDING MORE SUPPORT TEAM ADVOCATES?

✓ Two at $1,000 per month = $24,000 per year
✓ Four at $500 per month = $24,000 per year
✓ Eight at $250 per month = $24,000 per year
✓ Twenty at $117 per month = $28,000 per year

YOUR FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION AT ANY LEVEL IS GREATLY APPRECIATED

Please send your request to be added to the mailing list to Wy Plummer at WPlummer@PCAnet.org

To pledge financial support the African American Ministries send your commitment to:

Mission to North America
P.O. Box 890233
Charlotte, NC 28289-0233
Designate: African American Ministries