

renews **DIGITAL**

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WHY ANOTHER SYNOD?

Instead of division or collision, let's get back to mission

Ever since PFR began suggesting some form of structural realignment in the wake of the 218th General Assembly, many thoughtful opinions have been expressed on the shape and form such a change might take. But some misunderstandings still persist.

Some people, remembering the “two synod” proposal from a decade ago, immediately assumed this is what PFR was reviving. It is not. Proposing the creation of one “revisionist” synod and one “traditionalist” synod, and asking congregations to affiliate one place or the other, would be like declaring civil war. Bad idea.

Others, hearing PFR’s contemplation of a new, non-geographic synod, immediately assumed we were “bailing out” of denominational involvement, either by designing a “cocoon of safety” for disenchanted conservatives or by mimicking the New Wineskins Initiative on a path that eventually leads to an exit door. Wrong again. Our goal is to deepen evangelical involvement in and through the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Some have presumed that self-proclaimed “evangelicals” would automatically be expected to abandon their participation, voice, and influence in their current presbyteries, tipping the denominational scales once and for all. Nope.



GOING DIGITAL

Economic realities are impacting many decisions for all of us, and *renews* is no exception. PFR remains committed to bringing you stories of renewal and timely information, equipping and supporting you in your ministry.

To accomplish this and be stewards of your support, we are switching from two large issues each year to a shorter bi-monthly publication, and we are taking *renews* digital. If you currently receive e-newsletters from PFR, rest assured you will receive the new digital *renews* in your inbox. Otherwise, you may “subscribe” at www.pfrenwal.org. If you do not have email access, please call the PFR Office (502.425.4630) or drop us a note at 8134 New LaGrange Road, Suite 227, Louisville, KY 40222 and let us know you need a copy mailed to you. We appreciate your help as we meet the challenges of the day with the joy of the Gospel.

A new synod is intended to strengthen the witness of Presbyterians who find it difficult to minister with integrity where they are.

Our vision is simple: We want to create a place of integrity and challenge for disciples called to live and minister within the PC(USA), and to do so by accepting rigorous biblical standards for life and faith.

We are envisioning a new non-geographic synod comprised of non-geographic presbyteries: congregations and individuals who would form something analogous to a missional religious order within the PC(USA). The call is to active involvement in the world and in the denomination, living in deeper accountability—to God and to one another.

Why a new synod? Because the need of the world for a clear, compelling, and uncompromising witness to Jesus Christ demands that we give our full attention to God’s mission, not our internal struggles. A new synod in itself may not resolve the issues currently dividing us, but it will accomplish three things. It will create a way for us all to refocus on our mission. It will get us past our current unproductive “conversations.” And it will allow a significant number of congregations and individuals to remain active in this denomination until God brings resolution.

Much work has already been done, but please join us in praying God will make clear exactly how to shape this new possibility. And if you haven’t read PFR’s “Declaration and Call: Search for a New Beginning” issued following the 218th General Assembly, do so online at www.pfrenwal.org ❖

THE CONSPIRACY OF THE INSIGNIFICANT

Things are changing. But not everything.

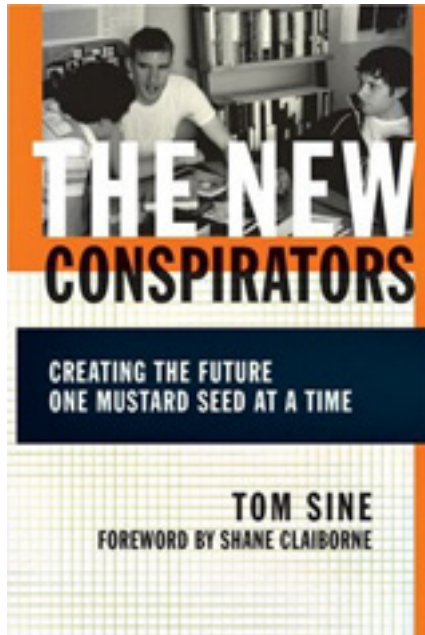
PFR's mission has not changed: to mobilize leaders of congregations within the Presbyterian Church (USA) to be biblically faithful and missionally minded in their service to Jesus Christ.

Our passion has not changed. God's Spirit has called us to seek the renewal/reformation of the PC(USA). We have neither reason nor right to abandon this calling.

God is always and everywhere at work in ways that are not immediately apparent. God delights in mustard seed movements; that small and seemingly insignificant faithfulness which can move mountains—and denominations.

Tom Sine writes of "The Conspiracy Of The Insignificant" in his recent book *The New Conspirators*, "God has chosen to change the world through the lowly, ordinary and insignificant. God chose an oppressed and powerless group of Hebrew slaves to be his people who would be a light to the nations. God whittled Gideon's army down to 300 men to defeat the Midianites. God chose a shepherd boy over his strapping older brothers to be Israel's greatest king. God came in the flesh to redeem us; a helpless baby, born to destitute





parents, and sleeping in a feed box. God’s greatest victory was won through what Paul called the ‘foolishness’ and ‘weakness’ of the cross.”

Our world thinks big. Counting success by votes, it watches trends and measures by size. Isn’t this a form of unbelief? The way of Jesus is the way of the few, the marginalized, the small.

Votes are important. We have worked hard and successfully to defeat amendment 08-B because fidelity in marriage and chastity in singleness is our Lord’s non-negotiable standard. But the PC(USA) wasn’t renewed or reformed by winning the vote, was it? God’s renewing and reforming Spirit will work as he has always worked: through the conspiracy of the insignificant—one leader, one session, one congregation at a time.

Our Wee Kirk Ministry is helping small congregations make the missional shift—one at a time. Our officer training ministry, congregational renewal events, and publications are mobilizing and equipping leaders—one at a time. NPWL is mobilizing women for leadership—one at a time. Our Seminary Ministry is nurturing future leaders and seminary faculty—one at a time.

Things are changing. But one thing that isn’t changing is PFR’s “small” part in God’s mission. We remain your fellow conspirators in God’s conspiracy of the insignificant. ❖

Phil Moran is pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Boise, Idaho, and heads PFR’s Issues Ministry.

The Father's Love
—1 John 3:1



July 4 – 7, 2009

2009 Christian Life Conference

AT MONTREAT CONFERENCE CENTER WWW.MONTREAT.ORG

This conference is a ministry of:
Presbyterians For Renewal
8134 New LaGrange Road, Suite 227
Louisville, KY 40222-4679



SPONSORED BY: *presbyterians for renewal*

COME HUNGRY!

Jesus proclaimed. Lives changed. Faith restored or reaffirmed. These are the three ingredients that make up the recipe for this year's Christian Life Conference. Actually, it's a recipe that hasn't changed for more than three decades and is still feeding hungry souls.

Held July 4-7 at the beautiful Montreat Conference Center in North Carolina, the conference is three days of worship and prayer, great teaching and fellowship, time away and time together. Newcomers only feel "new" for about the first 30 minutes.

This year we feature the rich teaching of both Alice Ridgill and Ken Bailey, insightful Bible study led by Melicent Huneycutt Vergeer, and a folk concert by David Bailey.

Come for relaxation and rest. Come for inspiration and joy. Come for growth in discipleship and faith. Come, join brothers and sisters in Christ in the beauty of this historic setting, and experience the extravagant love of God. "See what love the Father has given us that we should be called children of God, and that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1) ❖

Find more information and a downloadable brochure at www.pfrenewal.org/ministries/clc

NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHURCHES ENGAGED IN MISSION

Over the past year, we have been approached by numerous organizations inside and outside of the PC (USA), requesting to form partnerships with PFR. What we keep hearing them say is that PFR is concerned not just with issues, but with mobilizing and equipping leaders of churches to better fulfill the mission to which Jesus has called us.

“I have been impressed with PFR’s commitment to the PC (USA). They are passionate about serving pastors, leaders, and congregations,” says Kevin Ford, chief visionary officer and managing partner of one of PFR’s new partners TAG Consulting. “What has impressed me the most is their desire to help provide resources to individual congregations which represents a shift from the boiler-plate approach that so many advocacy groups take. Since we share many of the same passions as PFR, this is a great fit.”

As the PFR Board has met with and reviewed potential partners, each group has been vetted based on the quality of the services they offer and their ability to equip church leaders to be biblically faithful and missionally minded. So, we’ve only partnered with those who meet PFR’s standards of excellence and are in line with PFR’s mission.

Every other month, we will introduce a new partner to you and encourage you to give them a try. ❖





TAG CONSULTING

Our first partnership is with TAG Consulting.

TAG Consulting has helped hundreds of congregations achieve their goals over the last decade and has even worked with PFR. Through a process that includes a congregational survey, an onsite assessment, and visioning retreats, each congregation can expect to see a higher level of health in the coming years. TAG's client survey results indicate improvement in: member involvement in ministry, small group participation, missional impact, worship attendance, new ministries, and giving.

“When a congregation is stuck,” Kevin Ford of TAG says, “an outside perspective can help overcome roadblocks and inertia.” ❖

*Check out TAG's link on the PFR website.