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PC(USA) Events and News

- [Women of Color Consultation](#): Oct. 20-23, Charlotte, NC
- [2011 Montreat Institute for Church Leadership](#): Oct. 23-27, Montreat, NC
- [2011 Administrative Personnel Association National Conference](#): Nov. 3-6, Las Vegas NV
- [Faith in 3D](#): Jan. 12-16, 2012 Lake Buena Vista, FL
- [Disciple-Making Church Conference](#): Jan. 16-20, 2012 St. Pete Beach, FL
- [Stewardship Kaleidoscope](#): Mar. 12-14, 2012 - Charlotte, NC

Presbyterian Camps and Conference Centers Events

Camp Johnsonburg:

- ✓ **Caregivers Sabbath Day**
Sunday, Oct. 16
- ✓ **Advent Workshop for Pastors** - Thursday, Nov. 10
- ✓ **Senior High Fall Retreat**
Nov. 17-19
- ✓ **Junior High Retreat**
Dec. 2-4

[Racial Ethnic Convocation to be held at Stony Point Center November 18-19](#)

Presbyterian Seminaries Events Princeton Theological Seminary

- ✓ [The 2012 Princeton Forums on Youth Ministry](#)

On a post-Amendment 10-A, post-nFOG Church



Rev. Neal Presa
Presbytery Moderator

After the “post-” of 10-A, nFOG what happens next? What comes after? We are assured that God meets us today and in the tomorrows. While there may be anxiety about what happens in the Church, our Scriptural and confessional tradition attest to the enduring promise of God, that in life and in death, we belong to God. What this means is that whether you voted for or against 10-A or nFOG, we are still the Church of Jesus Christ, Jesus is still Lord, and God is still alive. Amen.

What this also means is that our partnership in the Gospel of Christ continues, but in a somewhat different context. 10-A provides a way for faithful engagement with candidates for ministry, teaching elders who transfer to presbytery, and ruling elders in local sessions. Let’s have such conversation in looking at the entirety of a person in tandem with the sense of the Church’s mission and witness in that particular context. In other words, how does this particular candidate for ordination, this ruling elder being nominated for service, or this teaching elder/minister who desires to be transferred into a presbytery – how does that person’s gifts, skills, experiences, and sense of call fit within the mission calling of the Church in this specific place?

nFOG provides such flexibility but tethers us to the rich and vibrant Reformed tradition to which we belong. nFOG paves the way for us to look less on structure, name changes, and infrastructure configurations, and instead focus our energies on getting out into our communities and neighborhoods, being among the poor and disenfranchised, deploying youth and young adults to transformative mission work camps.

I don’t see the vote results of 10-A and nFOG as a matter of winners and losers, or any vote in the Church for that matter. The Church is about participating in the work of God in the world. So regardless of the vote, the call of God upon us remains. Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God. May it always be so with us.

Article posted by Rev. Neal Presa, Presbytery Moderator, on his blog on Oct. 1, 2011

Pre-Employment Background Checks

The Synod of the Northeast has an account with LexisNexis® Employment Screening and Background Checks. LexisNexis is the leading pre-employment screening company.

The basic package includes verifying: previous employment history, county and state criminal checks, education, driver's license, social security number and motor vehicle records. Other services include a credit check and National Criminal Search. The prices are listed below:

\$60.00 Per Person/ Pr3 Check: Previous Employment History, County and State Criminal Records, Education, Motor Vehicle’s Records, SS#

\$7.00 Per Person/ National Criminal Check:

\$9.00 Per Person/ Credit Check: (Use one page consent form)

For more information you may contact [Paula Terrell](#) at the Synod Office.

- [Jan. 23 – 26, 2012](#)
[First Presbyterian Church, Santa Barbara, CA](#)
- [April 23 – 26, 2012](#)
[Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ](#)

✓ [Institutes](#) for Pastoral Formation and Renewal

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

- ✓ [Study Trip Explores Greece and Turkey – May 16-29, 2012](#)

The Alban Institute Letters

- [Theological Reflection in a Small Group](#)
- [Having Style](#)
- [Finding Yourself in the In-between](#)
- [An Experiment in Feedback](#)
- [Choices for Change](#)
- [Practicing the Presence of God in Ministry](#)

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Speed It Up!

All around us, the pace is speeding up. We must take that into account in leading churches.

For example, just months after seeming on top of the world, Facebook is entering a strange crisis – irritating its users with recent changes in news feed, losing its special edge, seeming more a commodity than a special place to be – all in the period of a few days.

Technology startups now measure their window of opportunity in months, not years. College athletic conferences seem to be realigning daily. Television shows being rolled out this week will have two months to find an audience. A new restaurant, a longtime restaurateur told me, has six months to make it or close. Some movies lose their luster after two weekends.

Web sites mature faster and need to be refreshed every few months. Books seem to cycle through the best-seller lists faster. Colleges change presidents faster; baseball managers change pitchers faster.

And on it goes, a quickening pace that sweeps up everything, even things that seem timeless, like faith communities. No one gets a free pass, not even entities that declare their intention to go slow or not move at all.

When the people we serve are caught up in this fast pace, when the needs we intend to address are changing scope and character faster, when our financial fortunes seem to fluctuate faster, there is no Go Slow button we can push.

So what do we do?

First, **accept a fast pace as the reality of our context.** We simply can't take months and years to make decisions. We need to act promptly.

Second, **streamline our decision-making process.** Trust clergy to be assertive, trust a small leadership team to see needs and act on them, and don't require even important matters to go through laborious efforts to build consensus.

Third, **engage people faster.** Bring people into the fold as quickly as they are prepared to move. No more “paying one's dues” before getting noticed and heard. Pastoral care systems need to act faster to glean needs and respond to them.

Fourth, **unfreeze all leadership systems.** Longtime members need to do less talking and more listening. Older leaders need to make way for younger, even though they might seem untested. Congregations need fresh ideas and fresh ears to the ground more than they need seasoned decision-makers.

Fifth, **speed up the determination of what's working and not working.** We don't have the time or resources to let a program flounder for a year. Try it for a few months, and let it go if outcomes are disappointing. If people don't follow through on commitments, act quickly to give their assignments to others.

If this seems unnatural, we should remember that it was our leisurely pace that was unnatural. Jesus did his ministry in a year's time. Disciples said Yes or No immediately. Healings were done the day they were requested. Feeding the multitudes happened without any planning committees being formed. Peter went immediately from the Spirit-filled room to the streets of Jerusalem without needing a three-year seminary career. Judas Iscariot was replaced without a two-year interim and search process.

Eternity might be a long time, but the days leading up to it go quickly, and faith communities serve in those “quick” days. We can leave eternity to God.

(The above article was written by the Rev. Tom Ehrich, founder of the Church Wellness Project.)